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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the role of the volunteer at New York State environmental education centers. The thesis observes that environmental education centers are generally not well funded and volunteer help is especially important. Results of the study, which utilized questionnaires for directors and staff, and opinionnaires for volunteers include: (1) volunteers performed teaching and trail interpretation most frequently and enjoyed these jobs most; (2) many volunteers were not actively recruited, but sought the centers on their own; (3) most volunteers were female between the ages of 18 and 65; and (4) many staff members felt that volunteers were not thanked enough. Other results are reported. (RE)

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THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS AT ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTERS IN NEW YORK STATE

WITH A MANUAL ON BETTER USE OF VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Cornell University
in Partial Fulfillment for the Degree of
Master of Science

by
Marsha Scott Guzewich
January 1979

SE 029 198

ABSTRACT

Purpose

In examining the role of volunteers used at New York State environmental education centers, I was seeking information that could be useful to people who are in a situation where volunteers are an important part of their staff. Because environmental education centers are not generally well funded, volunteers help is usually welcomed.

Methods

To determine which centers in New York State used volunteers and would be willing to participate further in my study, I sent a Background Questionnaire to the director of each facility listed in three directories of environmental education-related organizations. Ninty-six directors (or staff) responded to this questionnaire; forty-five of these respondents used volunteers and were willing to be interviewed regarding their use of volunteers. I set up the interview schedule so that people located in the same area were interviewed during the same time period. Thirty-three interviews took place over a five week period. I left Volunteer Opinionnaires at each center at which I conducted an interview. These were to be filled out by volunteers and returned to me. One hundred and fifty-one opinionnaires were returned--representing twenty of the thirty-three centers. All data collected was coded and punched on computer cards. I used SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) computer program to obtain descriptive statistics and cross tabulations of selected variables.

Results

- 70% of the respondents to the Background Questionnaire used volunteers to some extent.
- The mean number of volunteers at these centers was thirty-six. This averaged one hundred volunteer-hours used by a center each week. 83% of the volunteers reported they donated less than ten hours each week.
- Volunteers performed many jobs, most of which enhanced an already existing program.
- Teaching and trail interpretation were by far the jobs done most frequently, and considered the most challenging and rewarding.
- Many volunteers were not actively recruited, but sought out the center themselves. Requirements and application procedures varied, depending upon the situation.
- Most volunteers were females between the ages of eighteen and sixty-five. 57% of the volunteers reported at least a college degree (and 22% of these had a graduate degree).
- There is great variation in training and orientation programs offered for the volunteers. Both staff and volunteers feel that more of it would be helpful.
- Many staff reported that volunteers were treated as staff but further questioning on this topic led me to believe that this was true only to a limited extent. However, volunteers generally reported satisfaction with their treatment by staff.
- Staff reported many ways of thanking volunteers. Many staff felt they did not thank them enough.

- It does take time from staff in order to run a volunteer program. Most of the staff interviewed felt it was well worth the time.
- About half of the staff interviewed felt volunteer potential was not being fully realized. They indicated that staff could do a better job of training the volunteers and organizing the program. The volunteers also offered suggestions for better use of their potential: we could use more training, we could do different jobs, and we could give more time.

From my general impressions of the information collected, I feel that use of volunteers does have great potential, especially at informal education facilities such as those I visited. Many purposes are served by using volunteer resources: use of volunteers increases the number of people aware of and involved with the concepts and commitments of environmental education, volunteers represent the community and its spirit at an environmental education center, many centers' staff can implement more widespread programs with the use of volunteers, and last but not least, the volunteers can personally benefit and grow through the volunteer experience.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Marsha Guzewich was born on November 6, 1950 in Saratoga Springs, New York. She grew up in Kingston, New York and attended St. Lawrence University in Canton, New York. Intending to be a biology teacher since her early years, Marsha graduated from St. Lawrence with a B.S. in biology and a secondary school teaching certificate. A job with the Lansing Central School District brought her to the Ithaca area in September of 1972. While at Lansing, she taught eighth grade physical science and became involved with the girls athletic teams. After attending Dr. Verne Rockcastle's Summer Field Natural History course at Cornell University, she decided to become involved in environmental education. In September of 1975, Marsha enrolled as a full time graduate student in Science and Environmental Education. During this time as a graduate student, she spent one summer in the Adirondacks working as a counselor-teacher at one of New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's summer camps. The following spring was spent as a Naturalist-Trainee at the Schuylkill Valley Nature Center in Philadelphia. Summer and Fall of 1977 were spent collecting thesis data and writing. Marsha has taken a job as of January, 1978, at the Vermont Institute of Natural Science in Woodstock, Vermont, where she works with adult volunteers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Throughout the thesis development and writing period many people gave me support, encouragement, ideas and feedback invaluable to this paper as well as to my own well being.

I would like to take this opportunity to especially thank my advisor, Dr. Richard B. Fischer, for his input, support and many hours of time during the planning, implementation, and writing of this thesis.

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Jerri Andrews, an education research consultant in Cornell's Department of Education, was extremely helpful in the design of my three research instruments, as well as giving guidance with the computer analysis of the data collected. Jerri always provided the encouragement needed to continue plugging along!

The Schuylkill Valley Nature Center staff were most generous in giving suggestions and comments on my proposed research instrument. Volunteers of Schuylkill Valley Nature Center provided a sample group for pretesting the Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Of course invaluable to the research were the respondents to the Background Questionnaire, staff from those centers at which I conducted interviews, and the volunteers who returned the Volunteer Opinionnaire. Without all of those people there would be no data.

During my research, fellow graduate students offered many ideas and suggestions from their backgrounds in various aspects of environmental education, as well as moral support.

My appreciation and thanks to the friends and my family who were understanding and supportive during the thesis writing time.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Several kinds of informal education facilities throughout the country concern themselves with nature, conservation and the environment. Most of these facilities have their roots in what is popularly called a nature center. One of the first nature centers in the country was established in New York State fifty years ago -- the Trailside Museum in Bear Mountain State Park. As John Malkowski (1972) stated:

> "Nature centers began in the East as a grass roots means of properly introducing urban people, mainly children to natural wonders. To fulfill their curiosity, to expose them to natural beauties, to interweave the meanings of birds, butterflies, basswoods and barricudas in their lives were the reasons."

Most nature centers are tracts of land set aside for educational, scientific or preservational purposes. Often centers have visitor centers or interpretive buildings on the property. Whereas nature centers have a focus on nature and natural history, a recent off-shoot--the environmental education center--emphasizes the total environment and mans' relationship to it.

But first, how did this whole movement start? In 1911 Anna B. Comstock wrote:

> "Nature study is despite all discussions and perversions a study of nature: it consists of simple truthful observations that may, like beads on a string, finally be threaded upon the understanding and thus held together as a logical and harmonious whole."

Nature study was very popular half a century ago. It stressed ideas such as love of nature and careful observations of the natural world but it did not emphasize ecological relationships or environmental action.

In the 1940's the term "conservation education" came into popular use. Aldo Leopold wrote about it in A Sand County Almanac (1949). He claimed conservation education was commonly accepted as: obey the law, vote right, join some organizations and practice what conservation is profitable on your land; the government will do the rest. Leopold felt that this interpretation did not go far enough; it defined no right or wrong, assigned no obligations, called for no sacrifices and implied no changes in current values. Leopold saw the need for changes in peoples' attitudes and behaviors. He was disappointed that conservation education encouraged no changes other than those that were economically desirable.

The next term to come into use was "outdoor education". L. B. Sharpe (1957) described the relationship between education and the world outside the classroom as "That which can best be learned inside the classroom should be learned there. That which can best be learned in the out-of-doors through direct experience, dealing with native materials and life situations, should there be learned." Julian Smith of Michigan State University further described this idea in his book Outdoor Education (1963). He said outdoor education is not a separate discipline; it simply is a learning climate which offers opportunities for direct laboratory experiences in identifying and resolving real-life problems, for acquiring skills with which to enjoy a lifetime of creative living, for attaining concepts and insights about human and natural resources, and for getting us back in touch with those aspects of living where our roots were once firmly established. Smith also considered conservation education as a part of outdoor education. As he expressed it, "development of conservation attitudes is accomplished best when the learner has satisfying experiences with the resources involved..." (Smith, 1963). Some examples of outdoor education might be: writing poetry by a waterfall, using a map and compass, and learning camping skills. But again the ideas of outdoor education do not emphasize environmental action or man's ecological relationship with the environment.

However, another term is now popularly used--environmental education. Dr. William Stapp (1974) of the University of Michigan says: "Environmental education is aimed at producing a citizenry that is knowledgeable concerning the biophysical environment and its associated problems, aware of how to solve these problems and motivated to work toward their solution." This definition concisely states that we must not only learn about our environment, but understand, and most importantly, act on the solutions to these problems.

Mark Terry expands this definition of environmental education in his book Teaching For Survival (1971), by saying "all education is environmental education." He feels that environmental education is not a single subject, nor the sole responsibility of any one teacher or class. There is a need to go beyond the justification of informed electorate and aesthetic appreciation to include man seeing himself as a part of nature and a participant in the natural world. Terry says that man must develop a sense of value toward nature since he has the power to alter it. Our society's present values must change from unlimited growth and power on the earth.

Beginning with such movements as Earth Day in 1970, there has been a growing awareness that environmental education must reach all levels of society. But if environmental education is not a school subject, not another science class, not just being outdoors, then how does it fit into our education, our leisure time and our lives? This is not an easy question to answer. Some approaches are: to get at our young people through an experiential approach, to use the media and communication devices to inform citizens and thus motivate them to action, to work with school systems, or to work with nature center or environmental education center programs.

The focus of this study is the nature or environmental education center. As mentioned earlier these centers generally consist of land and a building. But what actually goes on there? The programs offered by nature and environmental education centers are based on the ideas from nature study, conservation education, outdoor education, and environmental education. But each center emphasizes something different. For this reason there are many different labels for these educational facilities: environmental education center, nature center, outdoor education center, environmental studies center, outdoor laboratory, junior science museum and trailside museum are some of them. The earliest of these educational facilities' programs were based mostly on nature study and natural history, but with the "ecology movement" and an increasing number of environmental problems, the focus of many programs is shifting to the concepts of environmental education and ecological principles. It is important for these centers' programs to deal with such critical problems as sewage disposal, nuclear power, land use and energy conservation and use.

It has been suggested that the natural amenities of a nature center may be used as a carrot to attract the attention of the public and help relate nature to human life quality and survival if we are to enjoy a lifestyle similar to what we now have. If this can spark an interest, hopefully it will lead the citizen to a deeper understanding of ecology, particularly humans as a part of natural systems, and will motivate and facilitate action to work on the solutions to these problems. The environmental education center must become a community center. It should be a meeting place of the natural world and man's urbanized world. It is important that activities take place not only on the center property, but also at the site of environmental problems such as sewage plants, polluted waters, and the urban environment. The controversial issues must be dealt with. This may be through adult programs, or through environmental action workshops for junior high, senior high and college students (Malkowski, 1972). Or, in appropriate fashion, the issues may first be brought up at the elementary school level.

For the purposes of this study, I will use the term environmental education center to describe all educational facilities included in my research. I use this term because I feel it describes a broad range of programs which might be offered at these educational facilities whether they are called nature centers, trailside museums or outdoor education centers.

The task of an environmental education center is often overwhelming in a situation where evolution of the basic goals still is taking place rapidly. Because the philosophies, methods, and audiences continue to change, the funding of many centers' programs is not stable. Many facilities are understaffed and incapable of achieving their goals. Thus the need for volunteers.

Judging from my own experience as a volunteer at an environmental education center, and from talking with people in this field, I saw a need for an investigation of the use of volunteers. In addition, it would be useful to prepare a manual on the use of volunteers for administrators and staff of environmental education centers. Therefore, I designed a study, using three research instruments, to survey the utilization of volunteer resources at environmental education centers in New York State.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE SEARCH

Little has been published on the non-educational activities that take place at environmental education centers such as the use of volunteers. Indeed, in reviewing the literature for the field of environmental education it was difficult to find much information at all based upon empirical research. Articles have been written and papers have been delivered dealing with various aspects of the field such as programs, facilities, philosophies and audiences, but most of these seem to be based on the writers' feelings and general observations rather than data collected. Some research has been done on evaluation of programs and measurement of attitudes and attitude change.

I was able to locate a few articles on the use of volunteers at environmental education centers, substantial material on the general subject of voluntarism, and some research that was done on volunteers working in health related fields.

Volunteers at Environmental Education Centers

Youth Volunteers

The proceedings from the Natural Science for Youth Foundation annual conferences are published and I located papers delivered on various aspects of environmental education in them. Several papers have been given concerning the use of young volunteers. Many of the National Audubon Society centers have an Explorer Club Program, which children can join at age nine. By completing a series of training sessions and activities, they become assistants and junior trail naturalists (Morton, 1964). These young people serve many of the same functions as adult volunteers, particularly in daily operations and trail construction.

The Rochester Museum and Science Center staff started working with young volunteers when their new building was nearing completion (Mahl, 1964). Fourty-two junior high school students from a nearby school helped with trail work, built dams and made brushpiles. They wanted to do something for the Youth Museum. From this body of students developed what was called the Junior Staff Program. The volunteers did jobs such as helping with maintenance of the building, helping with care and exercise of the animals, and giving lectures and demonstrations for the public. The Junior Staff acts as a self-governed body, with bylaws, and elected officers. New members are selected and trained by older members of the Junior Staff. Paid staff from the Museum are present during activities of the Junior Staff but do not interfere. An atmosphere of trust is maintained.

Teenage volunteers were also used at the Museum of Science in Boston (Stowe, 1973). Here, they were referred to as Junior Curators. These volunteers had a regular daily schedule of workers to help the staff animal curator. A young person starts as an Animal Room Aide and trains with a Junior Curator for at least eight weeks. After this time, if the Aide has worked enough hours and has done satisfactory work, he or she may get voted on by the Junior Curators and become a member of this group. Some volunteers who have proven themselves to be mature and responsible, care for animals on weekends and assist with courses on Saturdays and get paid for these weekend duties. Several other benefits accrue to these volunteers for their work at the Museum: learning and experience in the care and handling of animals, working with the staff, and the responsibility for running their own program.

Adult Volunteers

"The Role of the Volunteer in Exhibits" (Eason, 1969), also delivered at a Natural Science for Youth conference, deals with adult volunteers. In this article she discusses ways to recruit volunteers, and types of jobs they might do. She emphasizes that volunteers should be dealt with carefully. Not all people like to do the same types of work and volunteers' time should not be wasted with nothing to do or with meaningless work.

Katherine Huff of the American Red Cross gave a workshop called "Working with Volunteers" for the staff of National Audubon Society's Nature Center at Greenwich, Connecticut, 1977. I obtained notes, general comments and questions concerning this workshop from a person who attended. Some of the topics discussed were: need for volunteers, needs of volunteers, recruitment, orientation, training, recognition, and organization of the volunteer program. Some of these ideas and suggestions are mentioned in Chapter V of the thesis entitled "A Manual for Better Use of Volunteer Resources".

In response to my Background Questionnaire, a staff person from the Brooklyn Children's Museum sent me literature on their Auxiliary Staff Program, the volunteers of this organization. The materials sent included philosophies and rationale behind the program, definitions of volunteer and intern, requirements for the training program, responsibilities of the volunteers, sample application forms, specific job descriptions and other miscellaneous information. These were proposals for a new program not yet implemented.

In an article in Museum News called "Volunteer; Nuisance or Savior" Daniel Reibel (1971) discusses the plight of many museums presently understaffed and relying on volunteer help. He feels that responsibilities should be distributed between volunteers and staff in order to achieve the organization's purpose and goals. Volunteers should be treated as staff when they are given the same responsibilities assigned staff. Reibel suggests that volunteers be recruited to fill specific jobs and he mentions types of people to seek out. He also stresses the rewards and benefits the volunteers must get in order to remain interested. The organization must maintain some control of the volunteers and encourage and develop attitudes so that the organization will improve, not decline, with volunteer help. It is up to the staff to maintain a positive attitude toward volunteers and provide them with meaningful work, he contends.

Voluntarism

More literature is available in the field of voluntarism than in environmental education. Three books, as well as several articles, were made available to me by Dr. George Broadwell of the Cornell University faculty, who is involved in this field. In Volunteers Today: Finding, Training and Working With Them, Harriet Naylor (1973) discusses the initiation and operation of volunteer programs. She also analyzes some trends of society and the implications they have on voluntarism. Volunteer Training and Development: A Manual For Community Groups by Anne Stenzil and Helen Feeney (1968), also deals with running a good volunteer program. They emphasize training and evaluation of volunteers. I used some ideas from their evaluation section in designing my Volunteer Opinionnaire, the research instrument I used to query volunteers. The Volunteer Community - Creative Use of Human Resources by Eva Schindler-Rainman and Ronald Lippitt (1975) takes a look at volunteers from a community perspective. In this book, volunteers are viewed with respect to how they fit into a democratic society, what the societal trends are and how these trends affect voluntarism. Schindler-Rainman and Lippitt emphasize community, national and international groups, and the need for coordination in order to deal effectively with volunteers from all types of organizations. The authors give suggestions for administration of volunteer programs and they present a model program for training volunteer trainers. Schindler-Rainman and Lippitt feel there is great potential for voluntarism in the community and other segments of society.

In addition to these books, papers are available which emphasize particular aspects of voluntarism. "Securing Volunteers" deals with recruitment of volunteers and makes general suggestions on how to keep them content once recruited (Ward, 1965). "Improving Participation in Voluntary Action" deals with volunteers themselves--motivating them and maintaining their interest once they have started with an organization (Smith and Reddy, 1972). "Volunteerism" by Mildred Fizer (1971) gives a short general overview of voluntarism, emphasizing the need for training programs. "How to Choose A Leadership Pattern" deals with the problem of how much responsibility should be delegated to the volunteer (Tannenbaum and Schmidt, 1958). Several papers deal with volunteer leaders in 4-H programs, but the information is applicable to other situations as well (Boyce, 1971 and McCormick, 1974).

Volunteer Research

A long term study of rehabilitation center volunteers was quite similar to my study on environmental education center volunteers, except, of course on a much larger scale. Stanley Levin (1971) of Goodwill Industries, directed this study, which is itself the work of many volunteers. Phase I was a survey, using a questionnaire sent to rehabilitation centers, of the extent and nature of volunteer participation at these facilities throughout the country. The questionnaires were filled out by administrative personnel, auxiliary presidents and volunteers. Levin's research group visited some centers and held special meetings throughout the country. These meetings had audiences composed of a great variety of people such as executive directors and administrators of rehabilitation centers, directors of volunteer programs, handicapped persons, low income and minority people, elderly persons, volunteers and volunteer bureau officials. The meetings furnished information on volunteer use, problems with volunteers, and answers to other pertinent questions.

Levin's findings included:

- 68% of the rehabilitation centers responding used volunteers; total numbers were estimated at 275,000 to 300,000 volunteers.
- More than 50% of the volunteers were between 35-64 years of age; 20% were under 21; less than 10% were over 65.
- 90% of the volunteers were female and 10% male.
- 40% of the volunteers had some college work or a degree; 10% had less than a high school degree.

Levin also obtained information on the reasons why volunteers were not used at some centers. He reported the two chief reasons as the nature of the facility's program is such that volunteers can not be easily incorporated into service, or there is a lack of staff or lack of money to administer such a program. Some facilities in this study had stopped using volunteers. Reasons cited were: "volunteers are unreliable"; "there is a difficulty encountered in recruiting volunteers"; and "the volunteers are more bother than they are worth".

Phase II of Levin's study of rehabilitation centers was the development of manuals, materials and training tools pertaining to the use of volunteers. These guides were an assimilation and integration of data collected during Phase I, and extractions from literature on voluntarism. They were designed to assist paid staff and volunteer leaders with the organization and improvement of volunteer programs at rehabilitation centers throughout the country.

Levin felt there were some important questions to be posed: Should all rehabilitation facilities be encouraged to start volunteer programs? Should work be done to strengthen the volunteer programs that already exist? Who should the volunteer coordinator be? A volunteer? Paid staff? Full time? Part time? According to Levin it was important to recruit all types of people to get a full sppectrum of volunteers. He also felt it important to work on changing attitudes towards voluntarism, and saw future cooperation and coordination with national volunteer organizations.

Another study called "Performance Evaluation of Volunteers" done by Adolph R. Neal (1971) investigated the training and supervision of volunteers in Veteran's Administration hospitals. Supervisors were asked through a questionnaire to rate their volunteers. Neal reported that volunteers who had been trained and/or supervised received higher ratings than those having neither opportunity. Neal obtained data on age and level of education attained by the volunteers. He compared these characteristics with supervisors' ratings and found volunteers with less than an eighth grade education had the most low ratings, while those with graduate study had the fewest. He also reported that "younger" volunteers had higher ratings than other age groups, but he failed to specify any ages. Another problem with this paper was that no information was given on the rating system used by the supervisors.

A study called "Characteristics of Volunteers in a State Mental Hospital" (Katz, Levine, and Caldwell, 1972) indicated that the great diversity of age, education, length of service, and degree of motivation of volunteers, necessitates highly individualized programs of orientation, supervision, and on-the-job training.

Knowing that the use of volunteers is increasing, and that there is very little written material available on volunteers at environmental education centers, I felt that my research could provide needed information for environmental education centet staff and administrators.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND MATERIALS

I used three separate instruments to gather data for this survey: Background Questionnaire, Interview Form and Volunteer Opinionnaire. I sent the Background Questionnaire to environmental education center directors to determine which centers' staff used volunteers at their centers and to what extent. From those respondents using volunteers, I obtained a sample of centers where I could interview the director, or staff person most involved with the volunteers, using a series of questions dealing specifically with the use of volunteers. A supply of the Volunteer Opinionnaire - a questionnaire-type format on various aspects of volunteer work - was left at each center where I conducted an interview. Volunteers filled them out and returned them by mail.

Background Questionnaire

The Background Questionnaire (See Appendix A) was sent to environmental education center directors to determine if they used volunteers, and to obtain background information on the center itself. This form was divided into three parts.

Part 1 dealt with the use of volunteers. Only those respondents who used volunteers at their centers were to complete it. It sought information on the numbers of volunteers used, the amount of training offered by each center, and the number of hours of volunteer time utilized each week. Also included were questions asked about apprenticeship or training programs. An apprenticeship program usually involves a person's working full time at an environmental education center in a training capacity. By the end of the training period generally, the apprentice performs many of the same jobs as paid staff do. I consider apprentices to be a type of volunteer, but failed to make my definition of apprentice and volunteer clear in the Background Questionnaire. This provided information on the percentage of environmental education centers that have apprenticeship programs, and other aspects of these programs. In order to facilitate arrangements for future interviews, I asked for the name and title of the staff person working most closely with volunteers. The final question of Part 1 asked what jobs would not get done without volunteer help.

Part 2 was to be filled out only by staff from centers where volunteers were not used. But several respondents from centers using volunteers to a limited extent also answered some of these questions. I used all data here regardless of whether the respondents used volunteers or not. The questions asked about the need for volunteers, type of staffing, ability of staff to train and work with volunteers, availability of people to volunteer, and the center's past use of volunteer help. I asked for an explanation of why volunteers were not used.

The last section, Part 3, was to be completed by staff from all centers. I sought information about the center itself: number of staff, funding sources, programs available, number of visitors, number of hours open in each season, and number of years the center has been in existence. This information was obtained here because the answers were straightforward and would have taken up unnecessary time in an interview. It was also valuable to obtain background information on all centers of New York State, not just those where I interviewed staff. Accordingly, Part 3 provides information for a profile of the New York State environmental education centers and the variety that exists within this one State.

The Background Questionnaire went through several drafts before it was in final form. Comments, suggestions and proofreading help came from my advisors, a research consultant, fellow graduate students and friends. I sent a near final form to a nature center for staff critique. A cover letter accompanied the questionnaire (See Appendix B). This letter explained the purpose of the study, who was sponsoring the work, why I felt there was a need for this research, and the need for cooperation. Each letter was addressed to the director of the center and signed by my advisor and me. I designed the questionnaire so that, when folded properly and stapled, it was ready to be returned. A stamp, my address, and room for a return address were all located on the outside sheet.

The list of centers located in New York State was compiled from three directories: Directory of Nature Centers and Related Environmental Education Facilities, published by National Audubon Society (1975), Directory of Natural Science Centers published by Natural Science for Youth Foundation (1976), and Directory- Nature and Environmental Education Centers in New York State, published by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Environmental Forum, SUNY Albany, (1977). Every facility listed in one of these directories located in New York State received a questionnaire and cover letter; a total of one hundred and thirty-four. Several of the facilities had titles other than an environmental education-related term, such as junior museum, zoo, botanical garden, but rather than bias the list of centers by discriminating by title alone, I sent the materials to all facilities listed. Some staff responded and said they felt that their organization was not appropriate for the study. I personally knew of several centers that operated in New York State but were not listed in any of the directories (because they were of recent origin). Deeming them appropriate to my research, I sent them materials, also.

The first set of questionnaires was sent out in early March, 1977. In May I sent a second letter (See Appendix C) and another stamped copy of the questionnaire, to the forty-six center directors who had not yet responded to the first mailing. I continued to receive questionnaire returns through June and started interviewing in late June, 1977.

As the questionnaires came back they were put into categories:

a) used volunteers and willing to participate further in the study

b) used volunteers and were not willing to participate in the study, and

c) did not use volunteers.

Only those in the first category were considered for interviewing.

Interview

There were several reasons for deciding to interview those people involved with volunteers at the various environmental education centers. I felt it might be easier to get cooperation with the research if I actually asked the questions in person, rather than try to do it by mail. There was also less chance for misinterpretation if all questions were posed in the same way for every person. I was also interested in meeting people who worked at environmental education centers and wanted to see what the facilities were like at the various centers.

The background literature and a Naturalist Training Program at the Schuylkill Valley Nature Center (where I worked with volunteers) both helped me make decisions on the specific questions to include in the Interview Form (See Appendix D). The categories of questions included needs, recruitment, training, responsibilities, recognition and problems. I asked six or seven questions concerning each category. Suggestions and ideas came from my advisors, fellow graduate students, a research consultant, and staff from the Schuylkill Valley Nature Center. I practiced my interviewing techniques on people who worked with volunteers at environmental education centers not included in my survey sample.

From the returned questionnaires, forty-five respondents indicated use of volunteers and willingness to participate in the rest of the study. These centers were grouped according to location. I set up the interview schedule in order to visit all centers located in one section of the State during the same time period; this saved time and unnecessary travel. In order to schedule interviews, I called the centers and set up appointments with the appropriate people. Generally this worked out quite well, but in a few cases the people were not available for interviewing during the time scheduled for their location. In a few cases I was unable to contact the right person in order to set up an appointment. In another case, the person to be interviewed was no longer with the organization and her replacement did not start until after the summer when interviewing would have been completed. For these reasons, I visited and interviewed at only thirty-three centers. But, some centers from all areas of New York State were visited as well as centers of varying staff sizes and development levels; I feel this sample is representative of those in New York that do use volunteers. The interviewing period lasted about five weeks.

The interview was designed to take about fifty-five minutes, but there was great variation depending on the person with whom I met. The time range was thirty-five minutes to four hours! Locations of interviews also varied depending upon the situation. Most took place inside a relatively quiet office, but one took place in a chevy van (I interviewed one person as she drove into town to do errands) and one took place in the hospital (the person interviewed was in traction). I recorded the responses to each question by hand at the time of the interview. Because these responses were to be categorized and coded later, I did not record all answers verbatim. Each person answered the same questions following the same order.

At the time of the interview, I brought a supply of Volunteer Opinionnaires to each center. These were to be filled out by the volunteers and returned by mail.

Volunteer Opinionnaire

By using the Volunteer Opinionnaire (See Appendix E), I attempted to get the volunteers' perspective on the situation. At first I had hoped to be able to interview volunteers also, but soon realized that this would take more time than I had. The opinionnaires included questions such as "What jobs do you do?" "How did you get recruited?" "How did you get trained?" and "Are you satisfied with your volunteer work?" Respondents also answered questions concerning personal data in order for comparisons of all volunteers.

Again, ideas came from my advisors, fellow graduate students, a research consultant and the staff of the Schuylkill Valley Nature Center. I pretested the first draft of the opinionnaire on the Schuylkill Valley Nature Center volunteers. They offered some suggestions and I revised the opinionnaire and retested this draft on several volunteers from Cornell Plantations. After a few minor revisions, the opinionnaire was ready to be used.

The sample of 151 returns of the opinionnaire is relatively small considering the average number of volunteers from each center was about thirty-six according to the background survey. But this number is heavily weighted by large organizations such as zoos and museums, rather than the smaller environmental education centers. The return was also small because the data collection took place in the summer when fewer volunteers were used, and many were on vacation and difficult to locate in order to have them fill out an opinionnaire. I left the opinionnaires at each center with a large self-addressed envelope for return mailing. All staff people who had not returned their volunteers' opinionnaires by mid-August, 1977, received a reminder. After receiving this, most people sent back opinionnaires right away, or sent a note explaining why there were no opinionnaires to be returned. The returns represented twenty of the thirty-three centers. Some opinionnaires continued to arrive after the previously returned opinionnaires had already been coded, programmed and run on the computer. About ten opinionnaires were not used because of the late return.

I was pleased to see that one center's director used my opinionnaire to evaluate his own volunteer program. This helped me also because it insured a large number of returns came from this center.

Data Analysis

I used the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) computer program to run all statistics. I coded each of the three instruments and key punched all data onto cards. For some questions where the responses were not of limited choice, the responses were collapsed into general categories and then coded.

Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were obtained for all variables. Cross tabulations were also run on selected variables from the instruments. I used the SPSS program to obtain statistics from each instrument separately, but could not use the computer for comparing the three instruments at once. In some tables percentages did not add up to precisely 100 due to rounding errors.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

There are some basic questions on the topics of voluntarism for which I sought answers, using the three research instruments: Background Questionnaire, Interview, and Volunteer Opinionnaire. The three separate instruments contain some data that is periferal to the basic questions.

I sent the Background Questionnaire (See Appendix A) to 134 centers. Some of these were not environmental education centers as such, but were listed in the directories of environmental education centers; namely, Directory of Nature Centers and Related Environmental Education Facilities, Directory of Natural Science Centers, and Directory- Nature and Environmental Education Facilities in New York State. In a few cases, several centers were operated by one organization. For example, the Nassau County Museums operates six facilities on Long Island. The resulting total of separate sponsoring organizations was 121. In cases of multiple facilities under one organization, only one person was interviewed to represent all of the facilities. The resulting totals were: 121 separate organizations received questionnaires, staff from 96 (79%) responded, and 84 (69%) of the returned questionnaires were suitable for coding.

The questionnaires that were returned and useable were grouped into two categories: use volunteers, and do not use volunteers. The category of most interest was the one involving centers using volunteers. I asked the respondents if they would be willing to participate further in the study and, as expected, several people indicated they did not wish to participate. Reasons given were: recent participation in another survey, or number of volunteers is variable or very small, or volunteer program is in the planning stages. Many respondents did indicate that they were particularly interested in the results of the research.

The only category of centers returning Background Questionnaires that was eligible for the interview phase of this study was those centers indicating use of volunteers and willingness to participate further in the study. There were forty-five centers in this category; ten other centers were not willing to participate even though they used volunteers. Only thirty-three interviews took place for the various reasons already mentioned in Chapter III. This is thirty-nine percent of the total number of respondents from the Background Questionnaire, and sixty percent of the respondents using volunteers and willing to participate.

The interview questions (See Appendix D) were divided into categories and I asked them in the same order at each interview. I recorded responses as they were given, but later collapsed them into broader categories for coding and statistical purposes. In many cases the staff people gave more than one answer to a question. I assumed that the first response given by a person was most important and foremost in his/her mind, and therefore separated the first and second responses given for these questions in the tables showing the frequencies and the percentages for the different responses.

I left the Volunteer Opinionnaires (See Appendix E) at each center at which I interviewed staff. Although the mean number of volunteers used by each center was thirty-six, I was not able to obtain that many returns because relatively few volunteers were used in the summer, the season during which I conducted all interviews and collected volunteer data. One hundred and fifty-one Volunteer Opinionnaires were returned and coded. These came from twenty of the thirty-three centers at which I interviewed. The number of opinionnaires returned by each center ranged from two to twenty-eight.

Need for Volunteers

An important concern of this research is need for volunteers. This includes why volunteers are used as well as how they are used. All three research instruments included questions relating directly to this topic.

Why Use Volunteers

The first question posed in the interview was: "Why do you use volunteers?" The responses were quite varied but logically fell into six categories. Most people gave more than one reason and these were coded separately because I felt that the first reason given was probably the foremost in their mind and therefore more important than the others.

Table 1. Reasons for using volunteers at environmental education centers as reported at interview.

Response Category	First reason		Second reason	
	N	%	N	%
Lack of money	26	79	1	4
To enhance the program	4	12	11	42
Career exploration and training for the volunteer	2	6	2	8
Public relations and community involvement	-	-	5	19
Benefits for the volunteer	-	-	7	27
Lobby group	1	3	-	-
Totals	33	100	26	100

Twenty-six people said "lack of money" was the main reason for using volunteers. However, there was a wider variety of reasons given as the second response to the question. Eleven people said "to enhance the program", seven people hoped they could be of benefit to the volunteer, and five people said "volunteers are important for public relations and helped get the community involved with the center." The responses given by center staff indicated a concern for both parties--the center and the volunteers.

Why Not Use Volunteers

One might also wonder why some centers do not use volunteers. Part 2 of the Background Questionnaire concerned non-use of volunteers. This part was to be filled out only by staff from centers not using volunteers. However, in some cases staff from facilities using small numbers of volunteers or using volunteers only sporadically, also completed this section.

Table 2. Parameters of volunteer use for centers where staff reported in Background Questionnaire that volunteers were not used.

Question	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Is your program completely staffed by professionals?	24	65	13	35	37	100
Is there any need at your center for volunteer help?	27	79	7	21	34	100
Are there people available who might volunteer at your center?	22	73	8	27	30	100
Is there anyone on the staff who could train and work with volunteers?	22	66	12	34	34	100
Have volunteers been used in the past?	17	53	15	47	32	100

One can see from these data that: 79%(27) of the respondents felt there was a need for volunteers, 73%(22) of the respondents thought there were people available who might volunteer their time, and 66%(22) of the respondents felt that someone at their center could train and work with volunteers. These responses indicate an interest in use of volunteers, but perhaps some concern as to how to actually start a volunteer program. (Thus the need for a manual on the use of volunteers - see Chapter V of this thesis.)

In Part 2 of the Background Questionnaire, the respondents explained why volunteers were not used. Again, some respondents using only a small number of volunteers also completed this section. Many of the people responding gave more than one answer.

Table 3. Reasons why volunteers are not used at centers as reported in Background Questionnaire.

Response Category	N	%
Lack of staff or facilities	13	30
No commitment from people - or the right people are not available	11	25
No need for volunteers	12	27
Against organization's policy	4	9
Liability	2	5
Government bureaucracy	2	5
Totals	44	101

The reason given most commonly for not using volunteers was lack of staff and facilities (13 responses). Eleven people said that there was a lack of commitment or lack of the right people to volunteer. Eight people said that there was no need for volunteers. (In a previous question seven people indicated there was no need for volunteers.) The reasons cited here for not using volunteers were very similar to those of Levin's (1971) study on use of volunteers at rehabilitation centers.

Jobs Done By Volunteers

A question in the Background Questionnaire asked: "What jobs would not get done without volunteer help?" The responses did not cite specific jobs as I had expected. This might indicate that there were really no specific jobs that would never get done without volunteer help.

Table 4. Jobs not done without volunteer help at centers as reported in Background Questionnaire.

Job		N	%
Enhance the education program		35	38
Maintenance and construction work		27	29
Clerical jobs		11	12
Man building and sales area		8	8
Fund raising		9	10
Center could not run without them		3	3
	Totals	93*	100

*each respondent could give more than one answer so the total number of responses is greater than the number of centers that use volunteers

However, several people mentioned that certain jobs might get done sooner with the help of volunteers. The responses given most often (35 times) fell into the category "enhance the education program". Maintenance and construction work were also cited frequently (27 times).

At the interviews, staff persons from the various centers answered the question, "What have the volunteers done for the success of your program?" I had hoped that this would evoke responses that provided more information about the types of jobs the volunteers did. However, the answers to this question were very similar to those given for the question "Why do you use volunteers?"

Table 5. Ways volunteers have helped with the success of programs at centers as reported at interview.

Response	First answer		Second answer	
	N	%	N	%
Enhance the program	21	64	6	27
Help with routine and daily operations	4	12	6	27
Center could not function without them	4	12	3	14
Help with special projects and fund raising	2	6	3	14
Important for public relations	1	3	4	18
They have done very little	1	3	-	-
Totals	33	100	22	100

The most frequent response category was "enhance the education program". This included expansion of the program offerings, and an increase in the number of people the programs could reach.

In the Volunteer Opinionnaire, I listed twenty-four jobs and the volunteers checked off the jobs they performed at that center. (See Table 6.) The jobs checked most frequently were: teaching (62 times) and trail interpretation (70 times). I feel that these two jobs are actually similar. In both the Background Questionnaire and the interviews, the volunteers' work in the education programs was also mentioned most frequently. Public relations work and trail maintenance were checked forty and forty-one times respectively.

Following the list of jobs, the volunteers were asked to indicate the duties they felt were most challenging, most rewarding, and most important to the organization. Space was left for a separate answer for each. The next question also related to feelings about jobs; I asked which jobs they would like to do more of and which jobs they would like to do less of. (See Table 7.) One can see from the table that teaching and trail interpretation were considered most challenging by far (27% and 28%

Table 6. Numbers of volunteers performing specific jobs as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Job	N	% of total respondents
Audio-visual aide	21	14
Bookstore aide	25	17
Building or construction work	21	14
Developing curriculum materials	24	16
Display or exhibit artist	25	17
Filing	20	13
Fund raising	36	24
General office assistant	11	7
Graphics	11	7
Herbarium or collections aide	12	8
Land or trail maintenance	40	27
Library aide	16	11
Mailing lists	21	14
Membership	27	18
Newsletter	14	9
Public relations	41	27
Public speaking	27	18
Receptionist	27	18
Registrar	6	4
Teaching	62	41
Telephone aide	18	12
Trail interpretation	70	46
Typing	18	12
Writing correspondence	20	13
Other	42	28

Table 7. Volunteers' opinions on jobs done as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Job	Become more challenging		Become more rewarding		Most important		Like to do more of		Like to do less of	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Audio-visual aide	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	5
Bookstore aide	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	2	5
Construction work	3	3	1	1	2	2	2	2	-	-
Develop curriculum materials	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	-	-
Display artist	2	2	3	3	-	-	3	3	-	-
Filing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	8
Fund raising	5	5	-	-	3	3	-	-	3	8
Office assistant	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	1	1	3
Graphics	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	-
Herbarium aide	2	2	2	2	-	-	5	5	-	-
Trail maintenance	2	2	5	4	3	3	5	5	4	11
Library aide	3	3	2	2	1	1	3	3	1	3
Mailing lists	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5
Membership	-	-	-	-	5	5	-	-	-	-
Newsletter	-	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	-
Public relations	7	6	7	6	7	7	4	4	3	8
Public speaking	6	6	2	2	1	1	2	2	-	-
Receptionist	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	11
Registrar	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	3
Teaching	29	27	32	29	19	19	18	20	1	3
Telephone aide	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	3
Trail interpretation	30	28	36	32	22	22	27	29	1	3
Typing	-	-	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	3
Writing correspondence	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	1	3
Other	6	6	7	6	13	13	5	5	5	14
All jobs done by the respondent	4	4	4	4	11	11	5	5	-	-
Totals	106	100	112	100	102	100	91	100	37	100

respectively). These two jobs were also considered the most rewarding and most important to the organization. One reason these two jobs appeared here so frequently is that so many volunteers performed them. However, being directly involved with the educational aspects of a center might be more satisfying because one can easily see how that particular job fits into the overall purpose of the organization.

In response to "What jobs would you like to do more of?", again the most frequent responses were teaching and trail interpretation. There was an extremely large number of missing responses (114) to the question "What duties would you like to do less of?" Four people said they would like to do less trail maintenance and four said they would like to do less receptionist-type duties. A large number of the jobs were mentioned at least once here, indicating that opinion on each job varied with the individual.

To see how the volunteers felt the duties they performed were suited to themselves, and how the jobs had changed as they learned more on the job, I asked if the jobs they did as volunteers used their background and skills, and if the jobs they did had become more challenging. Eighty-two percent of the volunteers said yes, their volunteer work utilized their background, and seventy-five percent said yes, the jobs became more challenging.

To find out if the responses to these questions were related to the type of job done, I grouped the twenty-four jobs into six categories: clerical, educational, public relations, labor, artistic, and specialty jobs.

Table 8. Categories of jobs done by volunteers collapsed from listing of jobs in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Category title	Jobs included
Clerical	Filing
	General office assistant
	Mailing lists
	Membership
	Receptionist
	Registrar
	Telephone aide
	Typing
	Writing correspondence
Labor	Building or construction work
	Land or trail maintenance
Educational	Developing curriculum materials
	Teaching
	Trail interpretation
	Public speaking
Public relations	Fund raising
	Public relations
	Public speaking
Artistic	Display or exhibit artist
	Graphics
	Newsletter
Speciality	Audio-visual aide
	Bookstore aide
	Library aide
	Herbarium or collections aide

It is likely that one person could be counted in more than one category since volunteers do a variety of jobs. Using these job categories, I ran cross tabulations with the two questions dealing with background skills and challenge of the jobs.

Table 9. Cross tab of volunteers separated by job category, compared with responses to "Have your volunteer duties utilized your background and skills?" as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Job Category	Duties use Background and Skills					
	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Clerical	68	89	8	11	76	100
Labor	36	90	4	10	40	100
Educational	94	96	4	4	98	100
Public relations	57	70	4	30	61	100
Artistic	33	92	3	8	36	100
Speciality	47	90	5	10	52	100
All respondents	123	92	11	8	134	100

It is not surprising that the volunteers who performed educational jobs had ninty-six percent correspondence with yes, jobs done utilize background skills. The volunteers performing public relation-type jobs had the lowest percentage of correspondence, with seventy percent. It is harder to define the background and skills important in public relations work and therefore harder to feel that one's skills are being used.

Table 10. Cross tab of volunteers separated by job category, compared with responses to "Have your duties as a volunteer become more challenging?" as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Job Category	Have duties become more challenging?					
	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Clerical	53	80	13	20	66	100
Labor	32	84	6	16	38	100
Educational	63	77	19	23	82	100
Public relations	43	84	8	16	51	100
Artistic	27	79	7	21	34	100
Speciality	39	81	9	19	48	100
All respondents	84	75	28	25	112	100

In response to the question "have your duties become more challenging?", those respondents in the public relations jobs had the highest percentage of correspondence (84%) and the respondents in the educational jobs had the lowest percentage of correspondence (77%).

By far, the most common type of job performed by volunteers was education or program related. This indicated to me how important the volunteers are to many centers' staff.

Hours of Volunteer Use

The Background Questionnaire included some general questions on volunteer use. One question asked for an average number of volunteer hours used per week. The mean number of hours was a surprisingly high one hundred hours. Most centers were open only an average of 60-90 hours per week, depending on the season. This indicates either a large number of volunteers giving time, or some volunteers giving large amounts of time. The high number of hours also is a result of some of the larger organizations that were part of the survey. Organizations like zoos and botanical gardens were generally large, with large staff size and large numbers of volunteers. The mean number of volunteers used by each center was thirty-six, with the range from two to two-hundred and fifty.

The volunteers also answered several questions concerning the time they donated. (See Table 11.) The majority of volunteers (60%) indicated they worked less than five hours per week. But nine percent of the respondents worked more than twenty hours per week. To determine whether the type of job performed influenced the amount of time a person donated, I ran a cross tabulation of the six job categories and the responses to this question. The people doing either clerical jobs or educational jobs were the most likely to work less than five hours per week (57% correspondence and 56% correspondence respectively). Respondents doing artistic

Table 11. Cross tab of volunteers separated by job category, compared with the number of hours donated per week, as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Job Category	Hours worked at center per week									
	less than 5		between 5 and 10		between 10 and 20		more than 20		total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Clerical	41	57	16	22	6	8	9	13	72	100
Labor	15	38	8	20	7	18	10	25	40	100
Educational	56	56	25	25	7	6	10	10	98	100
Public relations	26	45	17	29	6	10	9	16	58	100
Artistic	10	30	8	24	5	15	10	30	33	100
Speciality	24	48	13	26	6	12	7	14	50	100
All respondents	79	60	30	23	11	8	12	9	132	100

jobs were least likely to work less than five hours per week (30% correspondence). Respondents performing labor jobs were more likely than those doing other types of jobs to work 10-20 hours per week (18% correspondence), and respondents doing educational jobs were least likely to work 10-20 hours per week (6% correspondence). Respondents performing artistic jobs were more likely than those doing any other type of job to work 20 hours or more per week (30% correspondence). Respondents doing educational jobs were least likely to work more than 20 hours per week (10% correspondence). Generally most respondents worked less than 10 hours per week. But of the people working more than 10 hours per week, the greatest percentage did either labor or artistic type work. Perhaps this is because the artistic jobs involve a great deal of creativity and labor jobs are such that there is always more work to be done.

The volunteers rated their feelings on the amount of time spent at the center as a volunteer. The scale ranged from too much time (rating 1) to too little time (rating 5), with five possible choices.

Table 12. Volunteers' opinions on amount of time spent volunteering as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Opinion Scale	N	%
1 - Too much time	2	1
2 - A bit too much time	3	2
3 - About right	95	65
4 - A bit too little time	26	18
5 - Too little time	20	14
Totals	146	100

One can see that very few volunteers felt that they gave too much time. Sixty-five percent of the respondents felt the amount of time they volunteered was about right.

To get an indication of the respondents' feelings about their volunteer work, I asked if the amount of time spent volunteering had increased, decreased, or remained the same. Forty-three percent said the time spent had increased, thirteen percent said it had decreased and forty-four percent said the time spent had remained the same. These data are shown in a contingency table with the respondents separated by job categories.

Table 13. Cross tab of volunteers separated by job category, compared with the change in hours worked as a volunteer, as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Job Category	Change in hours worked as a volunteer							
	Increased		Decreased		Same		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Clerical	42	54	6	8	30	38	78	100
Labor	26	62	5	12	11	26	42	100
Educational	45	42	16	15	46	43	107	100
Public relations	34	53	8	13	22	34	64	100
Artistic	21	58	4	11	11	31	36	100
Speciality	27	48	5	9	24	43	56	100
All respondents	63	43	19	13	65	44	147	100

Respondents in both the labor and the artistic jobs categories had higher percentages of correspondence in the "increased hours since starting" column than the other job categories (62% correspondence and 58% correspondence respectively). Those respondents doing educational jobs had the highest percentage of correspondence in the "decreased hours since starting" column with 15%. The respondents in the specialty jobs category had the lowest percentage of correspondence in the "decreased hours since starting" column with nine percent. In general terms, the greatest numbers of volunteers had either increased the time spent volunteering or had not changed the time spent. This indicates that most of these volunteers have remained interested and motivated after starting.

At the interview, staff persons answered the question "If you could have any number of volunteers or volunteer hours, how would this compare with what you have now?" Sixteen people said they could use more volunteers. However, ten people said it would depend on the volunteer. They would like more of some types of volunteers and less of other types. Six people felt they were presently at full capacity and could not effectively use any more people. The responses to this question indicated to me that many staff people felt that a limit on the numbers of volunteers and some selection of volunteers was important. I feel this helps to insure that those people selected to volunteer have a more meaningful experience and the center's staff are more likely to be satisfied with the volunteer work done.

I wondered if there were times of the year when volunteer help was not as essential as other times and asked "How does your need for volunteers vary with the season?" The various responses fell logically into only two categories: "Yes, our need for volunteers varies" (28 responses) and "No, our need for volunteers remains the same" (5 responses). For those indicating a change in the need for volunteer help throughout the year, I asked what happened with the volunteers when they were not really needed. Several people gave more than one response, but again these are separated because I feel the first response was foremost and therefore more important.

Table 14. What is done with unneeded volunteers as reported at interview.

Response Category	First answer		Second answer	
	N	%	N	%
Nothing	10	35	1	11
Special projects done with volunteers	6	21	4	44
Training sessions for volunteers	6	21	2	22
It is a problem	3	10	-	-
The volunteers are on call	2	7	2	22
It depends on the volunteer	2	7	-	-
Totals	29	101	9	99

Thirteen people either said they did nothing with the volunteers or that it was a problem. Several staff persons did say that the volunteers welcomed this as a "vacation" time and therefore they did not attempt to keep the volunteers to a schedule when they were not essential at that time. Only twelve people used the time to train volunteers or get them involved in special projects. It seems to me that the "off season" would be a good time to work with volunteers, either in preparation and training for the upcoming programs or to benefit the volunteers personally. But this does take time and organization from the staff who might also welcome a lull in a busy schedule.

Also regarding the amount of time the volunteers donate, those staff people interviewed answered the question "Do you ask for a minimum time commitment from the volunteers?" Three responses were of about equal frequency: "no minimum time expected", "flexible time commitment depending on the volunteer's schedule", and "expect a certain amount of time to be given". There were also differing degrees of satisfaction with volunteers depending on the amount of time center staff asked for from the volunteers; this will be discussed more fully later in this chapter.

There were some general trends in response to questions relating to this topic of need for volunteers. Center's staff use volunteers to benefit both the center and the volunteer. Many volunteers do jobs that are directly related to the education programs offered by the centers. The mean number of volunteer-hours used by a center is quite high (100 hours), the average number of hours donated per week by each volunteer is less than ten, and the number of hours given by a volunteer tends to increase or at least stay the same.

Recruitment

Methods of Recruitment

Data on recruitment of volunteers logically follows data pertaining to the need for volunteers. During the interview, staff people told how they located potential volunteers. Surprisingly twenty people (counting first and second responses) gave the answer "they come to us".

Table 15. Methods of recruitment for volunteers by staff as reported at interview.

Method	First answer		Second answer	
	N	%	N	%
They come to us	14	42	6	24
Advertise (posters, articles)	7	21	3	12
Recruit at colleges and high schools	5	15	6	24
Membership in the organization	4	12	3	12
Interest aroused through field trips and classes for public	2	6	6	24
Agency	1	3	1	4
Totals	33	99	25	100

The variety of responses was quite wide and several people mentioned more than one method. Eleven people said they recruited at colleges and high schools. Use of advertising (posters, newsletter articles, newspaper ads, etc.) was mentioned ten times.

On the Volunteer Opinionnaire, the volunteers also indicated how they had been recruited by checking off one (or more) of the ways listed.

Table 16. Ways of getting started as a volunteer as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Method	N	% of total respondents
Recruited by a staff member	37	25
Member of organization	49	33
Wanted experience and sought out center	53	35
Saw the need for my services	40	27
Recruited by a friend	26	17
Other	39	26

Two methods were checked by far the most frequently: "wanted experience and sought out the center" (53 times), and "member of the organization" (49 times).

Both the volunteers and staff people were in accord that quite frequently volunteers made the initial effort to begin volunteering at a center. Something about the center must initially attract the people -- membership, adult courses given, other programs offered, facilities or location.

Requirements for Volunteers

Staff people also answered questions concerning types of requirements they asked of volunteers. These included questions concerning type of application form used, background requirements of volunteers, and methods of checking out credentials of potential volunteers. These questions did not elicit the type of response I had hoped for. The answers were extremely brief. There were four categories of responses to "What type of application must a person make in order to volunteer: no application form required (10 responses), file kept on each volunteer (12 responses), formal application or interview from each volunteer including information of background, skills and interests of the person (6 responses), and informal interview (3 responses).

"What requirements must the volunteers fulfill?" elicited a wide variety of responses.

Table 17. Requirements of volunteers as reported at interview.

Response	N	%
No requirements	10	31
Certain background in environmental education or natural history or take a specific course	7	22
Time, interest and motivation	4	13
Depends on the job -- need for both skilled and unskilled labor	6	19
Membership in the organization	3	9
Minimum age	2	6
Totals	32	100

These ranged from no requirements to a specific background in environmental education or natural history. The diversity of requirements is not surprising considering the wide variety of jobs performed by the volunteers.

Staff responded to "How do you check out the credentials of a potential volunteer?"

Table 18. Ways of checking out credentials of potential volunteers as reported at interview.

Responses	N	%
Interview with person, or already know the person	18	86
References	1	5
Provisional time period	2	10
Totals	21	101

Eighteen of the staff people interviewed said the potential volunteer is already known (or known of) by the center's staff before starting volunteer work. This again shows that many centers staff are selective about who they permit to volunteer. Only two staff people said they had a trial period for new volunteers. Both of these centers have many volunteers of junior high and high school age and this provides a good way for the staff to see how responsible the young people will be as volunteers.

I also asked the staff people if they recruited volunteers for specific jobs. The responses were varied but fell into four categories: "yes, we recruit for specific jobs" (12 responses), "sometimes we recruit for specific jobs" (9 responses), "we try to get the jobs done by the present volunteer core" (6 responses) and "no, we do not recruit for specific jobs" (4 responses). It makes sense that jobs requiring special skills might require special recruitment.

The staff people also responded to the question "If a person shows up offering his/her services, do you find work for him/her to do?" Most staff (20) said that it was dependent upon the circumstances such as present needs for volunteer work at the center, and skills, motivation and interests of that person. Ten people said that it did not happen at their facility.

From the staff responses to the questions regarding requirements of volunteers, it appears that they are quite flexible. I would assume that personality of the potential volunteer also plays an important role in selecting appropriate volunteers.

Volunteer Characteristics

Considering the variety of responses and lack of definitive answers regarding the requirements of potential volunteers, it is worthwhile to consider the characteristics of the actual volunteers.

In the Background Questionnaire several questions were concerned with volunteer statistics. Directors and staff from centers all over New York State gave approximate numbers of volunteers by age and sex categories. The mean numbers of volunteers used at these centers according to age were: five under eighteen years old, twenty-six between eighteen and sixty-five, and six over sixty-five years old. The mean numbers according to sex were: fifteen males and twenty-one females. (The numbers from the questionnaires did not always add up to the same totals for the age and sex categories due to errors on the part of the respondents. Thus the mean number according to age was thirty-seven and mean number according to sex was thirty-six.)

The Volunteer Opinionnaire also included several questions concerning personal characteristics of the volunteers; these data represent twenty of the thirty-three centers at which I conducted interviews (151 respondents). The numbers of the volunteers responding to the Volunteer Questionnaire according to age were: four (3%) under eighteen years old, one hundred and twenty-seven (85%) between eighteen and sixty-five years old, and eighteen (12%) over sixty-five years old. (As compared with fourteen percent under eighteen years old, seventy percent between eighteen and sixty-five years old, and sixteen percent over sixty-five years old from the Background Questionnaire statistics.) The mean numbers of volunteers responding to the Volunteer Opinionnaire according to sex were: thirty-nine (26%) males, and one hundred and ten (74%) females. (As compared with forty-two percent males and fifty-eight percent females according to the Background Questionnaire statistics.) My speculation is that these differences result from the Background Questionnaire figures being approximations for all seasons, and a mean score from forty-five different centers, while the Volunteer Opinionnaire responses reflect a small sample of volunteers from a season when volunteers are not used as widely or as regularly as at other times. Despite change in societal trends, the greatest percentage of volunteers is still women between eighteen and sixty-five years old. It is becoming more difficult to keep women as volunteers because many are now working for pay. The group of people which may be most receptive to recruitment is retired men and women who are still quite able to be productive members of society but have no outlet for doing so.

The volunteers were asked how long they had been working at the center. The respondents were well distributed in the four categories: forty-three (29%) had volunteered less than one year, forty-one (27%) had volunteered one to two years, thirty-eight (25%) had volunteered three to five years, twenty-eight (19%) had volunteered six or more years. I was quite surprised to see that this many had volunteered for such a long time.

The volunteers checked off the highest level of schooling attained. These data were used in cross tabulations with respondents separated according to six different job categories. (See Table 19) The largest percentage of respondents had completed college (35% of all respondents). However, the percentages varied by job category: fifty percent of the respondents doing jobs classified as artistic had completed college, and only thirty-one percent of the respondents doing jobs classified as either clerical or speciality had completed college. Surprisingly, twenty-two

Table 19. Cross tab of volunteers separated by job category, compared with highest level of schooling attained as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Job Category	Schooling Completed											
	Grammar		High Sch.		Jr. College		College		Graduate		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Clerical	5	6	16	21	18	23	24	31	15	19	78	100
Labor	5	12	4	10	9	21	17	40	7	17	42	100
Educational	3	3	19	18	21	20	40	38	23	22	106	100
Public relations	1	2	8	13	17	27	24	38	13	21	63	100
Artistic	1	3	4	11	8	22	18	50	5	14	36	100
Speciality	6	11	4	7	11	20	17	31	17	31	55	100
All respondents	7	5	26	18	30	20	52	35	33	22	148	100

percent of all respondents had completed graduate school. Again there were variations according to job category. Thirty-one percent of the respondents doing specialty jobs had completed graduate school but only fourteen percent of those doing artistic jobs had completed graduate school. As might be expected, sixty percent of those respondents doing educational jobs had either completed college or graduate school.

The volunteers answered several questions concerning pay and family.

Table 20. Responses to questions concerning jobs and family, as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Question	Yes		No		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Do you hold a paying job in addition to your volunteer work?	60	40	89	60	149	100
Does the fact that you are not being paid affect your incentive and motivation in performing your job?	16	11	129	89	145	100
Have you ever had a paying job?	134	92	12	8	146	100
Do you have children at home?	44	30	104	70	148	100

In response to the question "Do you hold a paying job in addition to your volunteer work?" forty percent (60) of the respondents checked yes and sixty percent (40) checked no. An earlier question asked whether the volunteer also had other volunteer jobs and for this question sixty-four percent (94) said yes and thirty-six (54) said no. This makes sense since those with paying jobs probably do not have time for more volunteer work.

Only eleven percent (16) of the volunteers said that lack of pay affected motivation and incentive for volunteer work. It seems to me that motivation and incentive might be better in a volunteer situation since supposedly they are working because they chose to and because they enjoy it.

By far the largest percentage (92%) of respondents had held a paying job at some time. Only thirty percent said that they had a family at home. I asked how many children these respondents had. Twenty-three people had one child, fifteen people had two children, four people had three children, and only one person had four children.

They also rated what they felt their family's attitude toward their volunteer work was. This was done on a five point scale from very positive to negative. Only four percent of the respondents felt that family attitude was even slightly negative.

From the data indicating that many volunteers are not recruited as such but tend to seek out a center, it would seem that community involvement is very important for a center's survival in many aspects. If the community and the center have a good working relationship, then it would be easier for the center to attract volunteers from this group of people. Program offerings must be such that they would attract people's attention enough to motivate them to volunteer there.

Some recruitment of people in those groups not well represented in the volunteer force might serve to broaden the scope of a volunteer program. High schools, businesses and special agencies for senior citizens might be ideal places for recruiting.

Training

My greatest personal interest in this research was on the topic of training because lack of training was the biggest disappointment in my own volunteer experience.

Orientation

Before getting to actual training of volunteers, we should first consider orientation. Staff personnel answered questions on what types of orientation programs were offered for new volunteers. The responses fell into four different categories: formal orientation program offered (36%), informal orientation program offered (39%), no orientation given (21%), and program offered depends on the person (4%). As a follow-up to the question on orientation, the staff people were also asked what sort of internal workings of the center this orientation included. The responses to this were not as informative as I had hoped they would be, and fell into three categories: orientation included most of the internal workings (20%), orientation included some of the internal workings (63%), and orientation included very little of the internal workings (17%). This shows that volunteers at different centers do not have the same involvement with the running of the center.

The volunteers also answered questions about orientation. Seventy volunteers (46%) indicated that they had had an orientation of some sort. The percentage of volunteers indicating that they had had an orientation to the center may have been low because no explanation of the word orientation was given in the opinionnaire.

Pre-job Training

In the Background Questionnaire the staff and directors from centers in New York State answered questions about the number of pre-job training hours given to the new volunteers. Of the forty-five centers using volunteers the mean number of training hours was eight.

At the interview, staff personnel answered further questions on training available to volunteers before actually starting work. Many of the staff gave more than one answer, and these are separated.

Table 21. Types of pre-job training available to volunteers as reported at interview.

Training available	First answer		Second answer	
	N	%	N	%
Informal program	18	55	6	35
Formal training program	8	24	-	-
Depends on job and person	7	21	6	35
Suggested reading list	-	-	4	24
	-	-	1	6
Totals	33	100	17	100

From the table one can see that informal type training programs were offered most frequently. This informal program included such things as observation of jobs to be done, field trips, and on the job training. Formal training programs were described as those in which there was a specific training program for all volunteers doing the same types of jobs. Generally, these involved several sessions, each one covering some specific aspect of the job. Eighteen people said that they used formal training programs. Not surprisingly, several people mentioned that it depended on the person and the job.

The Volunteer Opinionnaire included a list of possible types of pre-job training and the volunteers checked off all that were available to them.

Table 22. Types of pre-job training available to volunteers as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Pre-job training	N	% of all respondents
Orientation	70	46
Workshops	39	26
Seminars	22	15
Observing staff and other volunteers	96	64
No training available	19	13
Other	29	19

The most frequently checked type of training was "observing staff and other volunteers" (checked 96 times). Nineteen respondents indicated that they had had no training.

The volunteers also responded to questions on the number of hours the training involved and how useful this was considered to be. The number of hours of training was compared with the respondents separated by job category. (See Table 23.) For respondents indicating "no training available", the highest percentage of correspondence was with respondents doing labor jobs (36% correspondence), and the smallest percentage of correspondence was with the respondents performing educational jobs (12% correspondence). For the respondents indicating "1-5 hours of training", the greatest percentage of correspondence was with respondents doing educational jobs (29% correspondence) or artistic jobs (31% correspondence). For those respondents indicating "6-10 hours of training", the greatest percentage of correspondence was with respondents doing specialty jobs (15% correspondence). Of the respondents indicating "more than 10 hours of training", the greatest percentage of correspondence was with the respondents performing public relations jobs (53% correspondence), and the lowest percentage of correspondence was with those respondents doing

Table 23. Cross tab of volunteers separated by job category, compared with number of hours of pre-job training available to them as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Job Category	Number of pre-job training hours									
	None		1-5		6-10		10+		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Clerical	23	32	16	22	7	10	27	37	73	100
Labor	14	36	6	15	3	8	16	41	39	100
Educational	12	12	30	29	14	14	47	46	103	100
Public relations	8	14	14	24	6	10	31	53	59	100
Artistic	6	17	11	31	5	14	14	39	36	100
Speciality	17	31	11	20	8	15	18	33	54	100
All respondents	*35	25	36	25	17	12	54	38	142	100

* This figure does not correspond with figures from Table 22. Perhaps some respondents in Table 22 did not consider these hours to be part of the pre-job training hours and checked none in Table 23.

specialty jobs (33% correspondence). Many hours of training were invested in volunteers despite the fact that twenty-five percent of the volunteers indicated they got no training at all.

The volunteers rated the usefulness of their training on a five point scale ranging from extremely helpful to no help at all.

Table 24. Volunteers' opinion on pre-job training available to them as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Opinion Scale	N	%
1 - Extemely helpful	61	53
2 - Somewhat helpful	34	30
3 - Neutral	18	16
4 - A little help	2	2
5 - No help at all	-	-
Totals	115	101

Sixty-one volunteers said the training was extremely helpful. Only two respondents indicated that it was close to no help at all. This seems to indicate that most volunteers feel that the training they do get is of some value (and probably well worth the centers' staff investment). Pre-job training is extremely important in boosting a volunteer's self confidence--which is very important as far as a successful volunteer experience is concerned.

On-going Training

The on-going training programs should be as important as the orientation and pre-job training programs are for the volunteer. Because I feel that volunteering should be a learning and growing experience for the volunteer, I asked the staff personnel what types of training were available for the volunteers after they had started working. There were often several answers from each person but only the first two are shown.

Table 25. On-going training available for volunteers as reported at interview.

Response category	First answer		Second answer	
	N	%	N	%
Observations and evaluations by staff	12	36	8	42
Informal discussions between staff and volunteers after job done	8	24	1	5
Seminars and workshops	7	21	5	26
No on-going training available	6	18	2	11
Suggested reading list	-	-	1	5
	-	-	2	11
Totals	33	99	19	100

The most frequent response was that volunteers were observed by staff. Many people said they were careful about direct evaluation because these people were volunteers. My personal feeling is that both the volunteer and the centers' program could benefit from constructive criticism by the staff. Looking at the table, one can see that the quantity and formality of the training available varied from center to center. Eight people said they gave no further training to their volunteers.

From a list of possible training techniques, the volunteers checked off the types of training available to them once they had started working.

Table 26. Types of on-going training available to volunteers as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

On-going training available	N	% of all respondents
Workshops	52	34
Seminars	19	13
After-duty discussions	63	42
Observations and evaluations by staff	61	40
No further training available	22	15
Other	24	16

Sixty-one volunteers said they were observed and evaluated by staff. This corresponds with staff responses to a similar question (See Table 25). "After duty discussions" was also checked frequently (63 times). Both of these types of training are informal, non-threatening, yet potentially very constructive methods. Twenty-two volunteers (15%) indicated they received no further training.

The volunteers rated the amount of training and help they received from the staff on a five point scale ranging from too much to too little. These data were compared with volunteers separated by the different job categories. (See Table 27.) From the table, one can see that the greatest percent of the respondents in all job categories indicated the amount of training was about right. The respondents doing labor jobs had the highest percentage of correspondence in the "too much training" column (Rating 1) with eight percent correspondence. The respondents doing the educational jobs had the highest percentage of correspondence in the "too little training" column (Rating 4) with nineteen percent correspondence. Of those volunteers who did not feel the amount of training was right, more volunteers felt they got too little training rather than too much training, regardless of their job category.

I also ran a cross tabulation on types of training available compared with the volunteers' opinions on the amount of training received (but I did not specifically indicate pre-job or on-going training). (See Table 28.) One can see from this table that respondents checking off any of the types of on-going training rated the amount of training in about the same percentages. Not surprisingly, those respondents checking "no further training available" had the highest percentage of correspondence in the rating "too little training".

Table 27. Cross tab of volunteers separated by job category, compared with their opinion on amount of training they received as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Job Category	Opinion scale for training											
	Rating 1 too much		Rating 2		Rating 3 about right		Rating 4		Rating 5 too little		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Clerical	1	1	2	3	65	83	9	12	1	1	78	100
Labor	2	8	-	-	31	79	6	15	-	-	39	99
Educational	2	5	2	2	80	75	20	19	2	2	106	100
Public relations	2	3	2	3	47	76	10	16	1	2	62	100
Artistic	1	3	1	3	31	84	4	11	-	-	37	101
Speciality	-	-	2	4	46	84	6	11	1	2	55	100
All respondents	2	1	4	3	110	79	21	15	3	2	140	100

Table 28. Cross tab of volunteers separated by type of on-going training available to them compared with opinion on amount of training they received as volunteers as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Type of on-going training	Opinion on amount of training and help received as a volunteer											
	Rating 1 too much		Rating 2		Rating 3 about right		Rating 4		Rating 5 too little		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Workshop	1	2	2	4	41	82	5	10	1	2	50	100
Seminar	1	5	-	-	16	84	2	11	-	-	19	100
Post-job discussion	-	-	2	3	51	82	8	13	1	2	62	100
Observation and evaluation by staff	-	-	2	4	48	84	6	11	1	2	57	100
No further training	-	-	-	-	11	58	8	42	-	-	19	100
Other	-	-	-	-	20	95	-	-	1	5	21	100
All respondents	2	1	4	3	110	79	21	15	3	2	140	100

Judging from the Volunteer Opinionnaire responses, the general concensus seems to be that the training offered is quite helpful. Most volunteers indicate that the amount of training is about right; however, those who do not agree with this tend to feel that they get too little training. In my opinion, it might be better for centers' staff to provide too much training for volunteers as opposed to too little; if the training is not used directly on the job at least the volunteer might stand to gain from it personally.

Responsibilities

The care and feeding of volunteers often involves some diplomacy on the part of staff. There are fine lines between what can and should be expected from an unpaid person, and what cannot be expected. The decision as to how much responsibility should be delegated to a volunteer is a difficult one.

Staff treatment of volunteers

At the interview, the staff persons answered a question regarding how the volunteers were treated as compared with other staff. Most responses were generally very brief and actually quite similar: volunteers are treated as equals with the staff (19 responses), volunteers are treated with extra care (7 responses), and volunteers are staff (4 responses), and there is a problem in dealing with volunteers because of lack of space for them (1 response).

Following the same topic, these staff also answered questions regarding volunteers at staff meetings. The responses were complicated by the fact that so many of the centers (11) had only one staff person and therefore very few "staff meetings" as such. In response to the question

"Do the volunteers, or any representative of them, attend staff meetings?", the answers were distributed in three ways: yes (8 responses), no (8 responses), and the volunteers attend only some meetings (8 responses). The staff also told me in what capacities the volunteers attended these meetings. Twelve people said that volunteers came as staff, and three people said that volunteers were encouraged to sit in on meetings (but it was not clear what it entailed to sit in on a meeting).

To get at this question from the volunteers' perspective, the Volunteer Opinionnaire also included questions regarding the treatment of volunteers by staff. The volunteers rated the amount of responsibility given to them by the staff on a five point scale from too much to too little responsibility. One hundred and twenty-five people indicated they felt it was about right. Only five volunteers said they had too much responsibility and twelve people said they were given too little. The volunteers also rated staff attitude towards them on a five point scale ranging from positive to negative.

Table 29. Volunteers' opinions on staff attitude toward them as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Opinion Scale	N	%
1 - Positive	102	71
2 - Somewhat positive	31	21
3 - Neutral	10	7
4 - Somewhat negative	1	1
5 - Negative	1	1
Totals	145	101

By far the largest number of volunteers felt the staff attitude was positive. Only nine people felt staff attitude was neutral or on the negative end of the scale. One problem with this question is that a volunteer could work with more than one staff person and feel that the answer would vary depending on the particular staff person referred to. They were not given any way to indicate this situation.

Importance of volunteers to the organization

In a previous section of this chapter I have already discussed the need for volunteers. This is of course closely related to the importance of volunteers. As already mentioned, responses to the question "What have the volunteers done for the success of your program?" indicated that the volunteers served to enhance the programs offered.

To see how much the volunteers were involved in programming, staff answered questions regarding what sort of input the volunteers had in the evaluation or planning of the center's programs.

Table 30. Volunteer input into education programs as reported at interview.

Response Category	N	%
Comments and suggestions made by volunteers	17	53
Volunteers formally involved with planning	8	25
Volunteers would like more input	4	13
No input from volunteers	3	8
Totals	32	99

Many staff personnel said the volunteers were encouraged to make suggestions and comments and that in many cases these were acted upon. However, only eight staff persons said the volunteers were formally involved with program planning and three people said the volunteers had no input at all. This indicates that the involvement of volunteers came most often in implementing, not planning, programs.

The volunteers also rated how important they felt they were to the organization. The responses to this were correlated with the respondents as divided into the different job categories. I was interested in determining whether the volunteers judged their importance to the organization depending on the type of jobs they performed. (See Table 31.) In general, most of the volunteers felt they were important (Rating 1 and 2) and no one felt he/she was of no importance (Rating 5). Of the volunteers rating themselves as extremely important (Rating 1), those performing public relations jobs had the highest percentage of correspondence with eighty-nine percent, and those performing specialty type jobs had the lowest percentage of correspondence, with sixty-eight percent. However, of the respondents rating volunteers as somewhat important (Rating 2), the people performing specialty jobs had the highest percentage of correspondence here with twenty-three percent. More respondents doing specialty jobs than respondents doing any of the other job types indicated that they felt their importance was less than Rating 2 (somewhat important).

Jobs

I have already considered jobs done by volunteers in terms of needs by the centers' staff for volunteers. I wish also to discuss jobs in terms of how they change as the volunteer becomes more skilled and experienced, and whether there are some jobs that are best not done by volunteers.

Table 31. Cross tab of volunteers separated by job category compared with their opinion on importance of volunteers to the organization as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Job Category	Importance of Volunteers to the Organization											
	Rating 1 (Extremely important)		Rating 2		Rating 3 (Neutral)		Rating 4		Rating 5 (Not at all important)		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Clerical	65	76	12	14	2	2	1	1	-	-	80	100
Labor	33	80	8	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	41	100
Educational	82	77	21	20	3	3	1	1	-	-	107	100
Public relations	57	89	7	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	64	100
Artistic	32	86	4	11	1	3	-	-	-	-	37	100
Speciality	38	68	13	23	4	7	1	2	-	-	56	100
All respondents	112	77	25	17	7	5	2	1	-	-	146	100

Table 32. Change in volunteer duties with time as reported at interview.

Response Category	N	%
Jobs generally stay the same	16	52
Jobs change as person progresses and change with the center's needs	10	32
Depends on the person and the time the project takes for completion	5	16
Totals	31	100

In response to my question concerning whether volunteers continued with the same type of job from the start as a volunteer, most of the staff people interviewed (52%) said that jobs generally stayed the same. However, this included volunteers who chose to continue with the same jobs and those volunteers involved in teaching -- a job that in itself is always changing.

The Volunteer Opinionnaire included a similar question: "Have your duties as a volunteer remained the same?" Sixty-three percent of the volunteers indicated that the duties had changed. This percentage is higher than that from the staff interview figure (48% said that jobs had changed). My assumption is that this disparity reflects a difference in perspective between a staff person or director, and the volunteer.

Although volunteers were not questioned on this, the staff people were asked if they felt there were some duties best not done by volunteers and specifically what these jobs were.

Table 33. Jobs best not done by volunteers as reported at interview.

Response	N	%
It depends on the volunteer	7	28
Volunteers should not do boring, monotonous jobs	7	28
Volunteers should not be involved in policy and decision making	6	24
Volunteers should not do high risk jobs	3	12
Volunteers should not do jobs professionals are paid to do	1	4
Volunteers should not do jobs where staff do not want to deal with volunteers	1	4
Totals	25	100

In most cases staff did not mention specific jobs. Seven people felt that it depended a great deal on the volunteer and the job. Confidence in the volunteer and the self confidence of the volunteer himself/herself were both taken into consideration. Seven other people said they felt volunteers should not do boring, monotonous jobs. Only paid staff should be assigned these tasks. Six people felt the volunteers should not be involved in policy and decision making. These responses indicate on one hand that the staff people realize that volunteers do not usually want to do mundane, unchallenging work, yet there are some types of work, such as policy making, that really are best left to staff. (I would assume that expectations from staff and professional standards are more controllable in a paid position.)

It is difficult to decide what responsibilities are to be given to volunteers. However, I feel that volunteers should not be underrated as far as their capabilities are concerned. For volunteers actively involved in a center's program, why should they not be actively involved in evaluation and future plans of the programs offered. A volunteer often has an entirely different perspective on the situation which just might be the insight needed to improve the present program.

Every center's staff should decide what jobs they feel are suited for staff only (and in some cases this means that some staff refuse to work with volunteers). Individual circumstances would best determine the policy that each center's staff feels most comfortable with. Type of organization, volunteers available, type of programs offered will vary and influence the decision made.

Recognition

As well as deciding the amount of responsibility to be delegated to volunteers, center staff must show the volunteers proper recognition for their services. This again is a delicate situation depending upon many things such as the center's situation, and the individual volunteer's personal situation.

At the interview, staff persons answered a question regarding the wearing of a name tag or any other type of label for public recognition of the volunteers.

Table 34. Identification of volunteers as reported at interview.

Response Category	N	%
Volunteers wear a name tag	12	38
Volunteers do not wear any identification	11	34
Volunteers wear a name tag if they work directly with the public	5	16
Volunteers are introduced to the group they work with each time	4	13
Totals	32	101

The responses often reflected strong feelings on the part of the staff: "Yes, we are very proud of our volunteer staff!" or "No, we are not running a military operation here!" One can see that staff are split just about evenly between those whose volunteers wear labels and those whose volunteers do not.

As a follow up to questions asked of staff, the volunteers rated their feelings concerning the amount of recognition they received as volunteers. The rating system was a five point scale ranging from too much to too little recognition.

Table 35. Volunteers' opinions on the amount of recognition they receive as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Opinion Scale	N	%
1 - Too much recognition	5	4
2 - A bit too much recognition	14	10
3 - About the right amount of recognition	111	80
4 - A bit too little recognition	6	4
5 - Too little recognition	2	1
Totals	138	99

Eighty percent (111) of the volunteers felt the amount of recognition they received was about right. Comparatively, a greater percentage of people felt they got too much recognition (14%) as compared with those who felt they got too little (5%). Several respondents wrote notes by this question indicating they were not volunteering for the recognition.

Compensation and Thank Yous

I asked the staff people directly how they thanked their volunteers. This elicited different reactions. Many people appeared embarrassed by how little this matter had been considered before.

Table 36. Ways in which volunteers are thanked as reported at interview.

Response Category	First answer		Second answer	
	N	%	N	%
Thanked verbally at every opportunity	21	64	1	4
Hold special events such as dinners, picnics and teas for them	6	18	4	14
We do not thank them enough	4	12	-	-
The volunteers benefit from being here	1	3	2	7
Volunteers receive written thank you notes	1	3	12	43
Volunteers get publicity through news letter or local papers	-	-	4	14
Special service awards given	-	-	2	7
Volunteers get a free meeting place	-	-	1	4
Volunteers are part of a secret fraternity	-	-	1	4
Volunteers get special field trips	-	-	1	4
Totals	33	100	28	101

The most frequent response (given 22 times) was that volunteers were thanked verbally at every possible opportunity. Thirteen people said that written thank yous were often sent after the end of a season or at the completion of a project. Four people admitted that they did not thank the volunteers enough. The variety of responses shows that there are many different and meaningful ways of thanking the volunteers.

The staff people answered a question concerning whether the volunteers got any special privileges or compensations for volunteering their time. Again the answers given are divided into first and second responses.

Table 37. Compensations for volunteers as reported at interview.

Response	First answer N	First answer %	Second answer N	Second answer %
Volunteers receive discounts on sales items, courses offered by the center, or given scholarships for workshops and courses offered by other organizations	8	25	2	11
Volunteers learn from the staff and gain experience	4	13	1	5
Room and Board	5	16	1	5
Volunteers get special privileges	3	9	2	11
Mileage or babysitting fees	3	9	2	11
Volunteers get paying jobs when they are available	2	6	-	-
Volunteers get college or high school credit	1	3	2	11
No compensations	6	19	-	-
Other	-	-	9	47
Totals	32	100	19	101

There are many ways in which the volunteers could be compensated. The most frequent response was that volunteers are given discounts on courses offered by the center staff, or discounts on sales items from the center. Again the wide variety of answers indicated that many different types of compensation are employed.

Hiring volunteers for paid jobs might also be considered another type of compensation. I asked the staff persons if they would hire a volunteer over an equally qualified applicant for a paying job at their center. I was not entirely comfortable with this question. On one hand the answer seemed obvious, yet if the staff person felt the opposite he/she was often quite defensive about it. (One person came right out and said he did not think it was a good question at all!) Most people (25) said they would hire the volunteer for the obvious reasons of: a known person versus an unknown person, and someone already knowing the expectations and the routine of the center versus someone who had not been around the center very much. One person said no, they generally did not hire volunteers because the expectations were so different between paid jobs and volunteer jobs. Two people said they could not answer because the situation had not yet come up at their center.

Center staff answered a question regarding references. Thirty people said they were often asked to write letters of recommendation for the volunteers. Only two people said they had not because their volunteers were not interested in references.

Judging from these data there is no one correct way to thank volunteers. It seems important that the thank yous be sincere and meaningful to the volunteer. Again, it appears that when the situation is of mutual benefit to volunteer and center, the appropriate recognition is a natural follow through. In some cases this recognition can be very discrete yet still be enough for the volunteer's needs.

Problems

Although some of the problems encountered in dealing with volunteers have already been discussed, there are some major concerns that have not yet been brought up.

Time

The amount of time staff must spend with volunteers is a big consideration. At the interview the question was posed as: "Volunteers take both staff time and energy and give their services in return. How do you feel staff input compares with volunteer output?" By far the largest number of staff (25) responded, without hesitation, that volunteer output was much greater than staff input. However, three people did say that input by staff was greater than the return from volunteers. Four people said they carefully watch where they invest time to insure that they get greater output from volunteers. These data have been compared with data from previous questions in contingency tables. One comparison was with responses to "Do you ask for a specific time commitment from your volunteers?" (See Table 38.) At one hundred percent of those centers where a certain time commitment was expected from the volunteers, the staff also said that they got greater output from volunteers than staff input.

The responses to the question on orientation programs offered for volunteers have also been compared with responses to the question "How does staff input compare to volunteer output?" (See Table 39.) From the contingency table one can see that one hundred percent of those centers' staff offering a formal orientation program felt that volunteer output was greater than staff input. As the table indicates, those staff people who had informal orientation programs were not in agreement about satisfaction with volunteer output.

I also ran a cross tabulation on pre-job training available to volunteers to see what correspondence there was with staff opinion on staff input compared with volunteer output. (See Table 40.) At one hundred percent of the centers where staff offered a formal training program, they also felt that volunteer output was greater than staff input. As the table indicates, those centers' staff offering informal types of training programs were not in agreement on satisfaction with volunteer output.

The last comparison of responses to "How does staff input compare to volunteer output?" was with responses to the question concerning on-going training available to the volunteers. (See Table 41.) At only those

Table 38. Cross tab of staff expectation on time commitment from volunteers, compared with their opinion on staff input compared with volunteer output as reported at interview.

Time commitment expected	Staff input compared with volunteer output							
	Greater volunteer output		Smaller volunteer output		Watch input		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Certain time commitment expected	10	100	-	-	-	-	10	100
No minimum time commitment asked of volunteers	6	60	-	-	4	40	10	100
Flexible about commitment to fit volunteers' schedules	8	73	3	27	-	-	11	100

Table 39. Cross tab of staff separated by type of orientation program they offer for volunteers, compared with their opinion on staff input compared with volunteer output as reported at interview.

Orientation offered	Staff input compared with volunteer output							
	Greater volunteer output		Smaller volunteer output		Watch input		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Informal	8	62	3	23	2	15	13	100
Formal	11	100	-	-	-	-	11	100
None	5	71	-	-	2	29	7	100
It depends on the person	1	100	-	-	-	-	1	100

Table 40. Cross tab of staff separated by type of pre-job training offered for volunteers compared with their opinion on staff input compared with volunteer output as reported at interview.

Pre-job training offered	Staff input compared with volunteer output							
	Greater volunteer output		Smaller volunteer output		Watch input		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Formal	8	100	-	-	-	-	8	100
Informal	13	72	1	6	4	22	18	100
Depends on person and job	4	67	2	33	-	-	6	100

Table 41. Cross tab of staff separated by type of on-going training offered for volunteers, compared with their opinion on staff input compared with volunteer output as reported at interview.

On-going training offered	Staff input compared with volunteer output							
	Greater volunteer output		Smaller volunteer output		Watch input		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Observations and evaluations by staff	9	75	1	8	2	17	12	100
Informal discussions between staff and volunteers after job done	8	100	-	-	-	-	8	100
Seminars and workshops	6	86	1	14	-	-	7	100
No further training	2	40	1	20	2	20	5	100

centers where staff had informal discussions with volunteers after jobs were completed, were the staff in agreement that volunteer output was greater than staff input. At those centers where no training was available to the volunteers, the respondents were distributed among the three responses: greater output by volunteers (2 responses), greater staff input (1 response), and watch where time invested (2 responses). The success of a volunteer program at the centers where staff time is not invested in on-going training, once the volunteer has started, is largely dependent on the volunteers themselves.

In a previous section of this chapter the volunteers also indicated how they felt about the amount of time they spent as a volunteer (See Table 12). Only three people felt they were giving too much time, ninty-five people felt the amount of time donated was about right and forty-six people felt they did not give enough time.

Turnover of volunteers

Only one staff person said that rapid turnover of volunteers was a problem. Seven people who used college students as volunteers said that there was a turnover by semester but they did not regard this as a problem. The other people said they had a core of loyal volunteers and this was their mainstay. Again this shows the need for strong community involvement and support.

Volunteers do leave of their own accord, but what about dismissal of volunteers who do not work out as expected? Because volunteers are not in the same position as paid staff this might be a concern of staff persons. At the interview staff persons answered a question on this topic.

Table 42. Dismissal of volunteers by staff as reported at interview.

Response Category	N	%
Talk over the problem with the volunteer	10	30
Do not call the volunteer or schedule him/her for any more jobs	9	27
They weed themselves out	7	21
It has not happened here yet	5	15
It is a problem	1	3
Transfer the volunteer to a different staff supervisor	1	3
Totals	33	99

Many people (10) said they talk the problems over with the volunteer and in most cases this works out quite well. Nine people said that those volunteers who are not working out realize this and stop coming as volunteers. Seven people said they simply stop scheduling jobs for those volunteers and hopefully the volunteer stops coming. These responses show the importance of communication between staff and volunteers, and the need for selection of people who are allowed to volunteer.

Scheduling

Volunteers not showing up as scheduled might be a concern to center staff also but most staff (from those interviewed) said they did not much problem with this. Twenty-one said they stressed the responsibility of working and keeping to a schedule at the very beginning of volunteer orientation and had very little trouble with this. Six people said notices were mailed to each volunteer or calls were made to each person before he/she was scheduled to work. Three centers' staff had systems where the volunteers checked at the front desk or with the director before working.

Volunteer Potential

Staff people answered a question dealing with whether they felt their center was utilizing the volunteers to full potential. Close to half of the people I interviewed (15) said they were not using the full potential of this resource. Ten people said they felt they were using volunteers to full potential, and six people said it depended on each volunteer. These data are also shown in contingency tables with data from previous interview questions.

The first contingency table of responses from "Do you use volunteers to full potential?" compares these data with types of pre-job training offered (See Table 43). For each category of training offered there were some staff who indicated that they felt they used the full potential of volunteers. Of the staff who felt that volunteers were not used to full potential, the greatest percentage said they offered informal types of training (observation of jobs being done, on the job training, etc.).

Staff opinion on realization of full potential of volunteer resources is also compared with the types of on-going training available to the volunteers (See Table 44). One can see that those staff who indicated that no further training was offered to volunteers also had no responses in the column of "yes, we use volunteers to full potential". Five of the six respondents indicating no further training also indicated that they felt the volunteers were not used to full potential. These data indicate that in order for volunteer potential to be utilized fully, staff time must be invested in programming and training.

Table 43. Cross tab of staff separated by type of pre-job training offered for volunteers, compared with their opinion on use of volunteers to full potential as reported at interview.

Pre-job training offered	Use volunteers to full potential					
	Yes		No		Depends on person	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Formal	3	30	3	20	-	-
Informal	4	40	10	67	4	67
Depends on the job	3	30	2	13	2	33
Totals	10	100	15	100	6	100

Table 44. Cross tab of staff separated by type of on-going training offered for volunteers, compared with their opinion on use of volunteers to full potential as reported at interview.

	Use volunteers to full potential					
	Yes		No		Depends on person	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Observations and evaluations by staff	5	50	5	33	2	33
Informal discussions between staff and volunteers after job done	3	30	4	27	1	17
Seminars and workshops	2	20	1	7	2	33
No further training	-	-	5	33	1	17
Totals	10	100	15	100	6	100

Staff people also spoke about "What are some of the problems preventing your center from getting full potential from volunteers?"

Table 45. Problems preventing use of volunteers to full potential as reported at interview.

Response Category	N	%
Not enough time to organize	14	50
Could use better training	2	7
Can't expect more from volunteers	4	14
Other	8	29
Totals	28	100

"Need for more staff and more time to organize the program better" were the most frequent response (14 times). Four people said that expectations cannot be the same for both staff and volunteers.

This was followed by a question asking what changes might be made to help obtain greater use of this volunteer potential. The responses were similar to those of "What are the problems in getting full potential?"

Table 46. Changes that might increase potential use of volunteers as reported at interview.

Response Category	N	%
Spend more time developing the volunteer program	9	38
Increase staff size to help with the development and implementation of volunteer programming	7	25
Change staff attitude towards volunteers	1	4
Decrease bureaucratic red tape involved in using volunteers	1	4
Use volunteers only for what they are willing to give	1	4
Develop a volunteer self-evaluation form	1	4
Ask for more volunteer help	1	4
Increase the incentive to work by giving school credit to volunteers	1	4
Increase the number of hours in a day	1	4
Increase volunteer motivation	1	4
Totals	24	100

Most respondents felt that they must spend more time on volunteer programming (9 responses), or more staff were needed (6 responses).

The final interview question was also related to time invested and volunteer programming. I asked if, realistically, it would be worthwhile to spend more time on volunteer programming in an attempt to increase the effective use of this volunteer resource.

Table 47. Is it worthwhile to spend more time on volunteer programming as answered at interview.

Response Category	N	%
No	13	42
Yes	10	32
Yes, but it will not happen for a while	8	26
Totals	31	100

The largest number of people (13) said no, they were already working to full capacity and had no more time to spend on volunteers. Eight others felt that more time was needed but that realistically they could not spend that time for a while. Several people made projections about future volunteer programs.

The data from these questions emphasizes again the necessity for staff time investment in volunteer programming. At centers where the staff offered formal training sessions and orientation programs, they also seemed most satisfied with volunteer help. At those centers where staff asked for a time commitment from the volunteers, the staff also indicated the greatest satisfaction with volunteer help.

The volunteers, as well as staff, answered questions on the topic of volunteer potential. In response to "Do you feel that your potential here as a volunteer is being used effectively?" many volunteers responded positively (on a five point scale ranging from "yes very much so" to "no, not at all"). These data were compared with the respondents according to job category. (See Table 48.) The respondents doing labor jobs had the highest percentage of correspondence (40%) in Rating 1 (potential very much used effectively). Those respondents performing artistic and educational jobs had the highest percentage of correspondence (35% and 34% respectively) with Rating 2 (potential somewhat used effectively). Respondents doing clerical jobs or public relations jobs had comparatively the highest percentages of correspondence with Ratings 4 and 5 (potential not used very effectively and potential not used at all). This may indicate several things. Volunteer potential is likely a difficult thing to measure, or perhaps people doing either clerical or public relations type jobs felt they could be better used in some other capacity, or perhaps their work could be extended or expanded.

The volunteers themselves offered some suggestions for better use of their services.

Table 49. Volunteers' suggestions for better use of volunteer resources as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Suggestion	N	%
Volunteers could do different jobs	13	21
Volunteers could benefit from more training and organization of the volunteer program	12	20
Improve communication between staff and volunteers	5	8
Ask volunteers to give more time-call them more often	11	18
Volunteers could be more involved with the planning aspects of the program	3	5
Pay the volunteers	2	3
Things are satisfactory as they are now	7	12
Volunteers could get together as a group and discuss the problems that exist	3	5
Other	5	8
Totals	61	100

Table 48. Cross tab of volunteers separated by job category compared with their opinion on whether their potential as a volunteer is used as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Job Category	Opinion on potential as a volunteer used effectively											
	Rating 1 Very Much		Rating 2		Rating 3 Neutral		Rating 4		Rating 5 Not at all		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Clerical	30	38	26	33	15	19	8	10	1	1	80	100
Labor	17	40	13	30	10	23	3	7	-	-	43	100
Educational	32	30	37	34	29	27	10	9	-	-	108	100
Public relations	23	35	19	29	15	23	7	11	1	2	65	100
Artistic	11	30	13	35	10	27	3	8	-	-	37	100
Speciality	21	38	18	32	11	20	6	11	-	-	56	100
All respondents	49	33	47	32	38	26	13	9	2	1	149	100

The three most frequently mentioned suggestions were that the volunteers could do different jobs (13 said this), that they could benefit from more training and organization of the volunteer program (12 said this), and that they could give more time or be called upon more often (11 said this). But there was a great variety of responses as shown in Table 49. Here the volunteers are also stating the need for training, variety and a meaningful time commitment.

Volunteer Expectations

Also related to the topic of volunteer potential are questions concerning reasons for volunteering and expectations from it. The volunteers checked off their reasons for donating time from a list of eight choices. They checked off as many reasons as applied to them.

Table 50. Reasons for people volunteering as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Reason	N	% of all respondents
Personal fulfillment	118	78
Interest in environmental education	114	76
Need for services by the organization	96	64
Sense of participation in an important service	102	68
Sense of fellowship with other volunteers	76	50
Sense of working partnership with the staff	68	45
Training for a paid position in this field	29	19
To learn something new	1	1
Other	24	16

The two reasons checked most frequently were quite different: personal fulfillment (118 times) and interest in environmental education (114 times). In order to compare reasons for volunteering with other data, I collapsed the eight reasons listed into four categories.

Table 51. Categories of reasons for people volunteering collapsed from listing in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Category	Reasons included
Personal reasons	Personal fulfillment Sense of fellowship with other volunteers To learn something new
Environmental education related	Interest in environmental education Sense of participation in an important service
Work related	Need for services by organization Sense of working partnership with staff
Career related	Training for a paid position in this field

In conjunction with the question on reasons for volunteering was a question concerning their expectations of volunteer work and whether these had been fulfilled or not. Volunteers rated their feelings on a five point scale ranging from "expectations very much fulfilled" to "expectations not at all fulfilled". Eighty-one percent of the volunteers felt that their volunteer jobs had either very much fulfilled expectations or at least somewhat fulfilled expectations. (See Table 52.) Respondents from each separate category correspond quite well with the percentages of the respondents as a group, except for those people who volunteered with career training in mind. These respondents had the lowest percentage of correspondence with Rating 1 (expectations very much fulfilled) and the highest percentage of correspondence with Rating 2 (expectations at least somewhat fulfilled). This might indicate that people doing volunteer work with a career in mind have expectations that are quite high.

Table 52. Cross tab of volunteers separated by reasons for volunteering compared with their opinion on whether their expectations had been fulfilled as a volunteer as reported in Volunteer Opinionnaire.

Reasons for volunteering	Opinion on fulfillment of expectations of volunteering											
	Rating 1 Very much		Rating 2		Rating 3 Neutral		Rating 4		Rating 5 Not at all		Totals	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Personal fulfillment	68	49	47	34	18	13	6	4	-	-	139	100
Environmental education related	68	51	41	31	17	13	7	5	-	-	133	100
Work related	60	54	38	34	10	9	4	4	-	-	112	100
Career training	12	41	13	45	3	10	1	3	-	-	29	100
All respondents	72	48	49	33	21	14	7	5	-	-	149	100

In general the volunteers seemed satisfied with their work; no volunteers felt that their expectations were not at all fulfilled and only two respondents felt their potential was not used at all effectively. The staff, on the other hand, felt that there were some problems in dealing with volunteers. However most of these were related to the time invested by staff and not the people who volunteered.

CHAPTER V

MANUAL FOR BETTER USE OF VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

Introduction

This manual is specifically intended for use by administrators and staff of environmental education centers, but it should also be useful to other organizations using volunteers. I compiled the information from literature in the field of voluntarism and the data I gathered from environmental education centers located in New York State. Staff from ninety-six of the environmental education facilities in New York State responded to a Background Questionnaire. I conducted interviews with staff at thirty-three of these centers where volunteers were used. One hundred and fifty-one volunteers, representing twenty of the centers, responded to a Volunteer Opinionnaire. These data provided perspectives on both sides of voluntarism at environmental education centers. I wrote a Masters Degree thesis on this subject while majoring in Environmental Education at Cornell University.

Starting a Volunteer Program

You should be prepared to answer several questions before considering use of volunteer help. Why do you need volunteers? Should you hire more staff rather than try to get free labor? Is your present staff willing to work with volunteers? What can you do for the volunteer?

Why do you need volunteers?

You probably have several answers for this question. Volunteers can help fill gaps in your program for which the rest of your staff just does not have time. In many cases they can help implement programs that have been developed by staff but require extra people to carry them out. The majority of centers I studied used volunteers as an integral part of their education programs. Volunteers can greatly increase the number of people your center can reach. They often have new ideas and great enthusiasm--bonuses (and inspiration) for over-worked staff. Volunteers are also invaluable in public relations work and in fund raising. These people are crucial in bringing the center and the community together.

Should you hire more staff rather than try to get free labor?

This question is more difficult to answer. Often you do not have a choice because there simply is not money for hiring another person. But, are you expecting volunteers to perform jobs that should be done by professional people in this field? If there is no money and volunteers can be utilized, the program focus should take this into consideration. Your program may not be as sophisticated or as innovative as some others, but it will effectively use the resources available to you.

Is your present staff willing to work with volunteers?

The situation is somewhat delicate when volunteers and paid professional staff work together closely. The attitudes of a center's staff and administrators may make it unrealistic to use volunteers for some kinds of work. But a good volunteer program that benefits your center can improve negative attitudes towards volunteers. Alternatively, have your volunteers work closely with only those staff who are enthusiastic about doing so. A staff member who is forced to work with volunteers may not be responsive and could create a difficult situation for all involved.

What can you do for the volunteer?

A person volunteers for some reason and it helps to know what it is that motivates each person. Some people want to utilize free time in constructive and useful ways. Others are dedicated to the field of environmental education. Volunteering offers a chance to determine if a certain type of job is suitable as a career. Keeping active and learning new things just for personal gain are also valid reasons for volunteering. Some volunteer for purely social reasons. Can your center help a volunteer fulfill these needs and still derive the benefits that you need? A time investment from both volunteers and staff is necessary in order to benefit both the volunteer and your center.

Needs

Just what do you need volunteers for? A list of jobs for which you need volunteer help should include a description of the job to be done, and specific skills necessary in order to do this job. In recruiting people to do these jobs, you must decide whether you will look for people who already have the necessary skills, or if you will train them. It is important to determine the number of volunteers for whom you can provide meaningful work. When volunteers are scheduled to work, do not waste their time by having no work (or busy work) for them to do.

This does not have to be as difficult as it sounds. Some people enjoy doing what you might consider boring work if there are some other factors involved. It often helps to have a group of people doing a job that is basically menial. However, some people enjoy doing mailings or other similar types of jobs simply because they are clearly defined tasks.

Recruitment

Staff from many of the centers in New York State indicated that in numerous instances volunteers came to the center and offered to volunteer. But environmental education centers must be a part of the community in order to attract help. By offering courses, field trips and other programs for the public, your center may spark the interest of a potential volunteer.

Other potential sources of volunteers are the local schools and local colleges. High school students can often get credit for doing independent projects. College students may be interested in working as apprentices or on special projects related to their studies.

What about retired people in your community? This is generally an untapped source of help. They have a great deal to offer and often the time to do it!

When looking for volunteers be selective. You do not have to allow everyone to work for you. Make it a privilege to be a volunteer, it improves the status of the job a great deal. If you are recruiting for a certain job, make sure the potential volunteer knows exactly what the job entails, and find out if the person has the qualifications needed to do it.

Do ask for a certain time commitment from each volunteer. This can be a weekly commitment or an agreement to complete a certain project. Then you can safely assume that job will get done, and your time investment is more likely to pay off.

Orientation and Training

Let your new volunteers know the purposes and goals of your organization. If the volunteers know the overall philosophy, it helps make their jobs, however small they are, more meaningful.

Orientation should also include a tour of all facilities at the center, and an introduction to the rest of the staff and other volunteers. Orientations can be given individually or with groups of new volunteers depending upon the rate at which you take on new volunteers.

Find out what skills your volunteers might have which could be utilized by your center. They often have enthusiasm and new ideas to offer, among other things. Volunteers' jobs should use their background and skills, in addition to providing them new experiences. Some volunteers are best used in organizing other volunteers. And others might help train new volunteers.

You might consider offering training sessions for volunteers during what is normally a slow time in your schedule. In this way both the volunteer and the center benefit from this "off season".

Job Training

My findings indicate that the volunteers receiving the most training were also the most satisfied as far as their own expectations and feelings of fulfillment were concerned.

For each type of job performed by volunteers, there are some specifics to consider when training new volunteers. However, some general concerns should be dealt with in training sessions, no matter what the jobs will be.

General training for all jobs

1. Job description: Each job should include a clear description of what is to be done.

2. *Importance of the job*: Put the specific job to be done in the framework of the whole organization to show where it fits in. This makes small, mundane jobs take on greater meaning for the volunteer.

3. *Expectations*: If you have specific expectations make them known and clearly understood! Included in this are: expectations about amount of time donated, expectations concerning professional behavior, expectations on quality of work, expectations concerning completion of projects, and expectations on reliability.

Teaching and trail interpretation

1. *Subject matter*: Decide what material is essential for the volunteers to have as background information when they teach classes. Do not get overwhelmed with all the facts. It is all right to say "I do not know".

2. *Teaching techniques*: Volunteers should know about some of the current methods used in environmental education. There are many games and activities that are helpful in teaching certain concepts. Another technique of skillful teaching is the art of questioning (and waiting for the answer). Stress ideas like group involvement and discovery as ways to make learning more exciting.

3. *Group control*: As important as knowing what to teach is how to control a group. Discipline may be old-fashioned, but some control over the group must be maintained or nothing but chaos will result.

Public relations jobs

1. *Subject*: Volunteers dealing with the public, in tasks such as fund raising, for example, must know the purposes and goals of the organization.

2. Dealing with people: Stress tactfulness. Dealing with people and obtaining what you need from them is an art.

Clerical jobs

1. Routines: Teach the volunteers how to use the materials available to them correctly. People in office-type jobs will need to know where supplies are kept and how to use certain machines. If some machines are delicate or temperamental, stress care in handling before the volunteer starts using them.

Labor jobs

1. Skills: Some volunteers may need to learn how to use the available tools. Be sure to stress safety and proper care of the tools.

2. Aesthetics: Before sending a crew out to blaze a new trail, or do any construction work, make sure your expectations are clear. Discuss the methods of laying out trails and how and why specific paths might be chosen. If trails are used for teaching, work with the teaching staff before laying out a new trail. They might have suggestions such as open areas in the trail so the classes might sit in a circle, or specific areas on the property to which the trail might lead.

Artistic jobs

1. Materials: For this type of job most volunteers will already have some of the skills needed, but they should be shown all materials available to them, as well as learning the proper use and care of the instruments.

2. Projects: Many of the volunteers will be doing specific projects. If you have something particular in mind make this clear at the outset so that both you and the volunteer will not be disappointed later.

Speciality jobs

1. Materials and machinery: Instruct the volunteers about materials available for use. Stress proper care and use of the materials.

2. Specifics: For each specialty (library aide, bookstore aide, audio-visual aide, etc.) there should be particular instructions that go along with the job. If there are already certain guidelines for the job, make this clear. If the job may be done as the individual volunteer chooses, let this be known also.

On-going Training

Training should not stop after the volunteer has started working at a particular job. To stimulate the volunteer's interest and keep motivation high, offer on-going training sessions.

1. Refresher courses: Periodically, refresher courses should be offered for any job. These sessions might be taught by experienced volunteers.

2. New skills: Continue to instruct volunteers on new machinery, new materials and new methods available to them.

3. Workshops and seminars: Offer workshops or seminars dealing with changes, developments and progress of the organization.

4. Environmental education and natural history related information: Lectures, movies, seminars and field trips should be offered on a regular basis so the volunteers have an opportunity to learn new things not necessarily directly related to their specific volunteer job.

5. Evaluation: Periodically observe the volunteers in action and offer constructive criticism and encouraging words. This should be done in a non-threatening way.

6. Discussions: Staff and volunteers getting together to exchange ideas and talk over problems that come up while working helps both groups. These meetings might occur after each time a group of volunteers works, or may be scheduled only at certain times such as the onset or completion of a project.

7. Timing: If all volunteers are not available on weekdays, have some training sessions scheduled for evenings, or on weekends. Many working people who might be willing to volunteer are left out if all training occurs between the hours of nine and five.

Responsibility

Staff should know their volunteers well enough to assess what they are capable of doing. Responsibility should be delegated appropriately to volunteers by staff and administrators.

The volunteers occupy a special position. Although they are not being paid, you still expect certain things of them. It helps to make your expectations clear to a potential volunteer so he or she can decide beforehand if it is worthwhile to spend his or her time in this way.

Encourage volunteers to help staff with the planning and evaluation of programs offered by your center, especially the programs they deal with most closely. Volunteers often have a different perspective from staff and administrators and may provide useful insights into problems.

If volunteers are considered a part of your staff, encourage them to attend staff meetings. A representative of the volunteers, or the head of the volunteer organization, might be more appropriate at staff meetings if space is a problem.

Recognition and Thanks

What compensation can you offer your volunteers? Here are some ideas:

1. Money: gas mileage, babysitting fees, or a set fee for each time the volunteer teaches a class.

2. Discounts: on sales items, courses and workshops offered by centers' staff, or scholarships for courses offered by other organizations.

3. Room and board: for apprentices and full-time volunteers.

4. School credit: independent study for high school and college students earning a teaching certificate.

5. References: write letters of recommendation for your volunteers.

How do you thank your volunteers? Whatever method you decide on, be sincere about it.

1. Take the time to say thank you and to establish a personal relationship with each volunteer.

2. Plan special social gatherings for staff and volunteers together.

3. Give service awards to outstanding volunteers and those who have donated a certain number of hours to the center.

4. Merely by providing your volunteers with a meaningful experience, you thank them.

Problems

Time investment

The training program offered must be worth your time and that of the volunteers. Before you train a volunteer, ask for a time commitment. To help insure that your time is well invested, do not train people not likely to stay with your organization.

If this eliminates most of your potential volunteers from the training program, keep in mind that quality rather than quantity is more important for a successful program.

Unwanted volunteers

One might consider this to be one of the greatest problems encountered when using volunteers. However, according to the people I interviewed, these situations usually have a way of working themselves out. When communication lines between staff and volunteers are open, it is often a matter of discussing exactly what the expectations are on both sides and perhaps relating this to the problem at hand. In some cases the solution entails changing the types of jobs done by the volunteer. But there are times when the volunteer and the center both benefit from the volunteer's leaving.

Some people said they solved their problems with unwanted volunteers by simply not scheduling them for any more jobs. Soon the unwanted person got the hint and stopped coming althogther.

A substantial number of staff felt it was a self-weeding system. In their situations the volunteers who were not doing satisfactory work had realized a problem existed and either requested a change in the type of work they performed or they stopped coming to the center.

Volunteer potential

Almost half of the staff people I interviewed reported they were not using volunteers to full potential. The directors admitted they should spend more time organizing the volunteer program, and in some cases this meant hiring another staff person in order to increase the potential use of the volunteer resource.

Spending time planning and organizing a volunteer program is an investment--for now and the future. Consider hiring a person to take charge of volunteer programming (especially if the potential exists for an effective volunteer program to substantially increase your income).

Take advantage of other community resources, also. Are there people in the community who would be willing to contribute their expertise to your training program?

Find out how other organizations are utilizing volunteers. Have workshops and seminars with other community groups to exchange ideas on volunteer use.

Periodically ask for feedback from your volunteers. And try using their suggestions!

Once you decide it is worth your investment to run a volunteer program, go ahead and try it!

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APPENDIX A

BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the questions and return them promptly to me by folding them address side out and stapling them shut.

Name of Center ______________________________

Your Name ______________________________

Part 1

1. Does your center use volunteers? yes ___ no ___
   (if you checked no please skip to Parts 2 and 3)
2. How many volunteers are used? number of males ___number of females ___ .
3. How many of the volunteers are: under 18 ___,18-60 ___ over 60 ___?
4. How many hours of training are given by the center before a volunteer actually starts duties? ___
5. How many volunteer hours of work are utilized by your center per week? ___
6. Does your center also have a formal apprenticeship program? yes ___ no ___
   (if you checked no please skip to #6)
   --How long does each apprenticeship period last? ___
   --How many people are apprentices per period? ___
   --How many periods per year? ___
6. Who is the person who works most closely with the volunteers?
   Name ______________________________ Title ______________________
7. What specific jobs would not get done without volunteer help?
   _______________, _______________, _______________, _______________

(Please turn the page over for Part 2)

Part 2

(If you filled out Part 1 skip this part and go to Part 3)

1. Is your program completely staffed by professionals? yes___ no___
2. Is there any need at your center for volunteer help? yes___ no___
3. Are there any people available who might volunteer at your center? yes___ no___
4. Is there any one on the staff who could train and work with volunteers? yes___ no___
5. Have volunteers been used in the past? yes___ no___
6. Please explain why volunteers aren't being used at your center.

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

Part 3

1. How many full time staff work at your center? ___
2. How many part-time staff work at your center? ___
3. What are the sources of funding at your center? Put the approximate percentage after each source: private organization ___, earned income ___, memberships ___, federal government ___, state government ____, county government ___, city government ___, college or university affiliation ___, name of college ____________________, other please specify ____
4. What programs are offered? Put a check after each program offered: school classes : elementary ___, junior high ___, senior high ___, college ___, teacher workshops ___, interpretive walks ___, self-guided trails ___, adult classes or field trips ___, seasonal programs ___, college level courses ___, public lectures or seminars ___, school site programs ___, resident (overnight) programs ___, visitor center open to the public ___, other (please specify) ______________________________
5. Approximately how many visitors per week: in the summer ___, in the fall ___, in the spring ___, in the winter ___?
6. How many hours is the center open per week: in the summer ___, in the fall ___, in the spring ___, in the winter ___?
7. How many years has the center been in existence? ___How long has the program (or something similar to it) that is now being offered been in existence? ___
8. Would your center be willing to participate in the survey? (This involves an interview and questionnaires for volunteers.) yes ___ no___

Thank you for your time and cooperation. I appreciate the effort you have made to help in this study.

Marsha Guzewich

Return Address

____

____

____

Ms. Marsha Guzewich
Education Department
Stone Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853

APPENDIX B

New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
a Statutory College of the State University
Cornell University

Department of Education
Stone Hall
Ithaca, N. Y. 14853

February 28, 1977

I am working on a Master's Degree in Environmental Education at Cornell University. My advisor, Dr. Richard Fischer, and I are interested in surveying nature centers of New York State to investigate the use of volunteers. We feel that effective use of volunteers is extremely important in implementing a program at a center, especially now when funds are so limited. I plan to determine how volunteers are being used and to develop plans to help centers make more effective use of volunteers.

Your center could be of great help to us by providing some information. I will be selecting a sample of the nature centers that return the initial questionnaire, and would like to visit these and interview one person from the staff who is particularly involved with the volunteers. If there is one volunteer who is in charge of the other volunteers, then an interview with that person would also be of value. The interview should take only 45 minutes. At the time of the interview questionnaires will also be distributed to the volunteers.

The questionnaire enclosed with this letter will be used to obtain some background information and to determine interest in participating in the survey. Even if your center doesn't presently use volunteers, please fill in Part 2 and Part 3 of the questionnaire.

We believe the results of this survey and research will be of value both to centers presently using volunteers and to those that will be using volunteers. I realize that people like yourself already spend many extra hours on the job and the time spent on this questionnaire is appreciated. Prompt return of the questionnaire will help me get the research under way (and conserve paper because I won't have to send you a second letter!). I am looking forward to hearing from you and shall appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Marsha S. Guzewich
Graduate student, Environmental Education

Richard B. Fischer
Professor of Environmental Education

APPENDIX C

New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
a Statutory College of the State University
Cornell University

Department of Education
Stone Hall
Ithaca, N. Y. 14853

May 27, 1977

In tallying up the results of my initial survey of New York State Environmental Education Centers I noticed that I hadn't received your return questionnaire. Your center is important to my study because I am interested in looking at all of the various types of centers of New York and how they use volunteers. Every center has unique information to offer.

I realize that spring is one of the busiest times of the year and perhaps the questionnaire already sent to you has been lost in the shuffle of paperwork. Enclosed is another copy of it for your convenience. I am looking forward to hearing from you and will be deeply grateful for your help.

Sincerely yours,

Marsha S. Guzewich
Graduate student, Environmental Education

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW FORM

Needs

Why do you use volunteers?

no $ comm. involvment   necessary evil   job best done by volunteers

What have volunteers done for the success of your program?

How does your need for volunteers vary with the season?

What do you do with unneeded volunteers in the off season?

If you could have any number of volunteers and volunteer hours, how would this compare with what you have now?

more   less   the same

Recruitment

Realizing your center's needs for volunteer services, in what ways do you locate people?

advertise   mouth   colleges   high sch.

What type of application must the person make in order to volunteer?

What requirements must the volunteer fulfill? Does this vary with the job?

If there are requirements in what ways do you check out credentials?

references   records   interview

When recruiting volunteers do you look for people to fill a specific job description?

If a person shows up offering his/her services do you find work for him/her to do?

Is there any minimum time committment expected from the volunteer?

hours/wk   duration of 1 yr

Training

Do you offer any orientation program about the center itself for the new volunteers?

If yes, how much of the internal workings does this include?
most some very little

What kinds of training are available for the volunteers from the center before they actually start working? formal program observe job informal on the job

Once the volunteer has started working what types of training are offered by the center?
post-job chat workshops seminars obs and eval by staff

Is there one staff person who is responsible for volunteers as a part of his/her job?

Responsibilities

How are the volunteers treated as compared with the staff?

same diff expectations

Is there any input from volunteers in evaluation or planning of programs?

In general does the volunteer continue to do the same type of work from the beginning?

Whose choice? staff vol.

In what ways does your center compensate for time or expenses that result to the volunteer because of services given to your center?

travel expenses free admission special privileges

Do you feel that there are some duties best not done by volunteer help?

If yes, what are these duties?

Recognition

Does the volunteer wear a name tag or some type of identification?

Is there a room or area from which the volunteers operate and where they meet?

Is this area especially for them?

How do you thank your volunteers for their services?

verbally written dinners service awards

Is there an organized volunteer group?

Does the head of the volunteer group or any representative of the volunteers attend staff meetings?

In what capacity do they participate at these meetings?

vote speak out

If there were two equally qualified applicants for a job at your center would you choose the person who had volunteered time at your center?

why why not

Have any volunteers asked for references or recommendations from the staff concerning their work at the center?

Problems

Volunteers take both staff time and energy and give their services in return. How do you feel the staff input compares with the volunteer output?

What happens if a volunteer doesn't work out as expected? Are there any means for dismissal?

Is there a rapid turnover of volunteers?
For any jobs does this happen in particular?

In what ways do you try to encourage volunteers to show up as expected and planned on?
sign in small fee

Do you feel that your center is using the volunteers to full potential?

If not, what are some of the problems that keep you from getting the full potential?
no committment unreliable no background threatening not enough available

What are some changes that might help increase the affective use of volunteers?

Would it be realistically worth your while to spend more time on volunteer programming in an attempt to increase the effective use of this manpower?

APPENDIX E

VOLUNTEER OPINIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Your responses will remain confidential and are needed to obtain some general information on use of volunteer time.

One type of question asked has a 5 point scale for the response. Only the extremes are labeled, yet you have 5 choices. Place a check or X in the box that comes closest to your feelings.

For example:
How do you feel about eating lima beans?

/___/___/___/_X_/___/
positive   negative

This indicates that my feelings about lima beans are not as negative as possible. Yet I feel more toward negative than neutral or I would have chosen the center box.

1. There are many types of jobs done by volunteers at environmental education centers. Please put a check in front of any duties you do or have done at this center as a volunteer.

___ audio-visual aide
___ bookstore aide
___ building or construction work
___ developing curriculum materials
___ display or exhibit artist
___ filing
___ fund raising
___ general office assistant
___ graphics
___ herbarium or collections aide
___ land or trail maintenance
___ library aide
___ mailing lists
___ membership
___ newsletter
___ public relations
___ public speaking
___ receptionist
___ registrar
___ teaching
___ telephone aide
___ trail interpretation
___ typing
___ writing correspondence
___ other - please specify
____

2. Which of these duties do you find most:

challenging? ______________________________

rewarding? ________________________________

important to the organization? ______________

3. Which of these duties would you like to do:

more of? __________________________________

less of? __________________________________

4. Have your duties as a volunteer:

utilized your background and skills? ___yes___no

become more challenging? ___yes___no

remained the same? ___yes___no

changed to include new duties? ___yes___no

5. Approximately how much time do you spend per week on volunteer duties here? (Including prep time, phone calls, travel etc.)

____hours

6. How do you feel about the amount of time you volunteer here?

/____/____/____/____/____/

too much time ... too little time

7. From the beginning of volunteer work here has the amount of time spent ___increased?

___decreased?

___remained the same?

8. Do you volunteer your time to any other organizations?

___yes___no

9. There are many ways of getting started in volunteer work. Please check the ways that helped you get involved here.

___ recruited by a staff member
___ member of the organization
___ wanted experience and sought out the center
___ saw the need for my services
___ recruited by a friend
___ other - please specify ______________________________

10. Check any of the types of training that were available to you before starting your volunteer services.

___ orientation
___ workshops
___ seminars
___ observing staff and other volunteers
___ no training available
___ other - please specify __________

11. The pre-job training lasted:
___ 0 hours
___ 1-5 hours
___ 6-10 hours
___ 10+ hours

12. In your opinion how useful was this training?

/____/____/____/____/____/

extremely helpful — no help at all

13. Check any of the types of training that are available to you now.

___ workshops
___ seminars
___ after-duty discussions
___ other - please specify ______________________________
___ observations and evaluations by staff
___ no further training

14. If you have problems concerning your volunteer duties, is there someone on the staff that you go to for help?

___yes___no

15. How long have you been affiliated with this organization as a volunteer?
___ less than one year
___ 1-2 years
___ 3-5 years
___ 6+ years

16. Check your age category.
___ under 18
___ 18-65
___ over 65

17. Check your sex.
___ male
___ female

18. Check your highest level of schooling completed.
___ grammar
___ high school
___ junior college
___ college
___ graduate school

19. Do you hold a paying job in addition to your volunteer work?
___yes___no

20. Does the fact that you aren't being paid here affect your incentive and motivation in performing your jobs?
___yes___no

21. Have you ever held a paying job? ___yes___no

22. Do you have children at home? ___yes___no
If yes, what ages are they? ________________________________

23. What do you see as the attitude of your family toward your volunteer work?

/____/____/____/____/____/
they encourage my efforts — they discourage my efforts

24. How do you feel about the amount of responsibility given to you as a volunteer here?

/____/____/____/____/____/
too much — about right — too little

25. How do you feel about the amount of training and help you receive from the staff as a volunteer?

/____/____/____/____/____/
too much — about right — too little

26. How do you feel about the amount of recognition you get as a volunteer from the center?

/____/____/____/____/____/
too much — about right — too little

27. Of what importance do you feel the volunteers are to the organization?

/____/____/____/____/____/
extremely important — not very important

28. What do you see in general as the attitude of the staff towards the volunteers?

/____/____/____/____/____/
positive — negative

29. The reasons for volunteering time to an organization are diverse. Check any reasons that apply to you.

___ personal fulfillment

___ interest in environmental education

___ need for your services by the organization

___ sense of participation in an important service

___ sense of fellowship with other volunteers

___ sense of working partnership with the staff

___ training for a paid position in this field

___ learn something new

___ other - please specify ____________________

30. Think back to your original expectations of giving your time here. Do you feel they have been fulfilled?

very much /__/__/__/__/__/ not at all

31. Do you feel that your potential as a volunteer here is being used effectively?

very much /__/__/__/__/__/ not at all

32. Give some suggestions for better use of your services.

____

____

____

____

Thank you for your time. I appreciate the effort and thought you put into filling out this opinionnaire. Your effort will help my research a great deal.

Marsha S. Guzewich